



SWIFT

THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

EXTRACTED FROM

SELECTIONS FROM SWIFT

EDITED BY

SIR HENRY CRAIK

OXFORD  
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY  
PRESS

LONDON: AMEN HOUSE, E.C. 4  
EDINBURGH GLASGOW LEIPZIG  
COPENHAGEN NEW YORK TORONTO  
MELBOURNE CAPETOWN BOMBAY  
CALCUTTA MADRAS SHANGHAI

HUMPHREY MILFORD

PUBLISHER TO THE  
UNIVERSITY

*Impression of 1928*  
*First edition, 1912*

## NOTE

The present edition of *The Battle of the Books* is taken from Sir Henry Craik's Selections from Swift (Clarendon Press, 1892). The complete *Life* is included.



## LIFE OF SWIFT.

---

JONATHAN SWIFT was born on the 30th of November, 1667, at a house in Hoey's Court, close to the Castle, in Dublin. His mother was then a widow, her husband having died, leaving her in very poor estate, in the spring of that year. His father, also named Jonathan, was the seventh or eighth son of the Rev. Thomas Swift, Vicar of Goodrich, near Ross. The Dean of St. Patrick's was ever more proud of this grandfather than of any other of his name. The Vicar was descended from a Yorkshire family of the name of Swifte, one of which stock is commemorated in a sixteenth-century brass still existing in the church of Rotherham. A branch of this Yorkshire family had migrated to Kent, and from this branch was descended the Vicar of Goodrich. Born in 1595, he had married Elizabeth Dryden, of Northamptonshire, niece to John Dryden's grandfather, and by her had a large family. He was not only Vicar, but a considerable landowner near Goodrich; and the house which he built to contain his large family—and which fully merits the Dean's description of it as denoting 'the builder to have been somewhat whimsical and singular'—is still standing. As the date over the door attests, it was built in 1636, and very soon after that date the Vicar was involved in troubles that effectually broke his fortunes. The Dean's father was born in 1640, and when he was still an infant the troubles of the Civil War began. The Vicar was not of a sort to hold aloof from the struggle. He became an ardent and pronounced

Royalist, was down on the Parliamentary lists as a delinquent, carried arms to supply the Royal strongholds, and had to defend his own house—fifty times, so it is said, plundered from roof-tree to cellar—against the Roundhead marauders. His family were treated with violence; he was imprisoned; his living sequestered; his cattle carried off; his property plundered or forfeited. Still clinging pertinaciously to the Royal cause, he carried all the money he could gather, quilted in his waistcoat, as an offering to the King, even when all was lost at Naseby. When the war ceased he was liberated, and apparently left unmolested. But his property was lost; and when he died, in 1658, he left his large family to seek their fortunes as best they might.

The eldest son, Godwin Swift, who had been trained as a lawyer in England, went to Ireland, where, in the settlement of landed estates after the disturbances of the Civil War, there was much work for a lawyer to do. He rose rapidly, partly by an abundant practice and partly by more than one profitable marriage. He became a wealthy man, and his success attracted others of his brothers to follow his steps to Ireland. Amongst these was his younger brother Jonathan, who, however, was without his brother's prudence and business capacity. He married, while yet very young, Abigail Erick, the dowerless daughter of an old Leicestershire family, and secured a moderate post, as Steward of the King's Inn, Dublin. First, a daughter was born to the young couple; and then, in the spring of 1667, the young lawyer left his wife (then in expectation of a second child) a widow. This second child was Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, born on 30th Nov. 1667.

The widow was left without resources of her own, and she and her children depended largely on the bounty of the successful elder brother, Godwin; yet the house in which her son was born was not so poor as to suggest that she was left uncared for or neglected. But the boy was destined for a time to live beyond the reach of his uncle's charity. His nurse, having to pay a visit to a dying relative at Whitehaven, took the infant with her, and kept him there until he was more than three years of age. There he learned to read: and he was fond, in later

years, of dwelling on this early visit to England, as he thought it took away something of what he held to be the stigma of his Irish birth. When he came back to Dublin, it was only to spend a short time with his mother: two years later he was sent by his uncle to Kilkenny School, and there, with William Congreve for his school-fellow, he remained until, at fourteen, he was entered as a pensioner at Trinity College, Dublin. Justly or unjustly, Swift retained a bitter recollection of his boyhood and of the niggardly charity doled out by his uncle Godwin. It would not be fair to accept Swift's reminiscences, darkened by his natural misanthropy, as a certain gauge of his uncle's conduct. Swift treated his own past with little complacency of memory, and the severe judgment which he passed on himself perhaps tintured his judgment of others. Naturally Swift rebelled against the somewhat slavish routine which then governed the College studies. But the extent of his rebellion against rule is matter of doubt: wearied, perhaps, with the common talk of early genius emancipating itself by the force of its own superiority from rule, he was wont to set down his College career in plain terms as that of a dunce. The stories of his rebellion against rule are probably as exaggerated as those of his dulness. A copy of the College roll for Easter 1685, recording the doings of the undergraduates, has been preserved. Swift did 'badly' in Physics: 'creditably' in Greek and Latin: 'carelessly' in his Theme. Strictly, such a result might have delayed his degree for a year; but 'by a special grace,'—which appears, indeed, to have been of ordinary occurrence—this strict rule was not enforced, and Swift proceeded to his degree in 1685. His College career was not recalled by him with more pleasure than his school days. The ordinary curriculum probably failed to attract him, and the pursuit of subjects for which he had no liking may possibly have left an after-impression of natural dulness: but the full gloom of his reminiscences must be ascribed to a sense of his dependence upon the charity of an uncle, who may have administered his assistance without that delicacy which was necessary in one who patronized a spirit such as Swift's.

When he had taken his degree, Swift, still unsettled as to his



future course in life, pursued his reading, until the source even of such charity as he had enjoyed, became dry. Godwin Swift had apparently allowed his ambition to carry him too far: he indulged in speculation; his fortune dwindled, and with it his faculties; he sank into insanity, and died in 1688. Some help still continued to reach Swift from his cousin Willoughby, the son of Godwin, who had sought fortune abroad: but dependence had taught him thrift, and from this time Swift determined to depend upon no one, and to use those faculties, whose extent, nature and proper application were problems yet unsolved, to gain for himself some means of livelihood.

The troublesome events that followed the Revolution in Ireland made it needful for Swift to seek his fortune beyond her shores, and his own inclination doubtless prompted him in the same direction. His mother was now settled in Leicester, and to her, from whom he had been so long parted, and who continued to be the object of his tenderest love, the young graduate, brooding over real or imagined wrongs, dominated by passions, and stirred by a genius over which he had yet gained no mastery, now came at the age of one and twenty. He says himself of this period of his life, that 'a person of great honour in Ireland (who was pleased to stoop so low as to look into my mind) used to tell me that my mind was like a conjured spirit, that would do mischief if I did not give it employment.' It is curious to see the half sarcasm in Swift's reference, even at this period, to 'persons of great honour': but whoever his Mentor was, he gave a judgment which Swift's life proved only too true.

Leicester had no attraction for him, beyond the company of his mother; and even had it not been so, a livelihood must be sought elsewhere. Sir William Temple's wife was a kinswoman of Mistress Abigail Swift: to him, therefore, application for employment was made, and made with success, and before the close of 1689 Swift became an inmate of Temple's house at Sheen. The dramatic contrast between the master and dependant has afforded subject for many pictures of impressive force. Temple, the astute diplomatist, the wary politician, tempering his statesmanship by something of the doctrinaire and something of the cynic; spending his honourable retire-

ment in the elegant pursuits of literature and landscape gardening, and employing his high social position, and the confidence and friendship of the great, to enhance the grace of his literary patronage; a god to his own circle, and respected beyond it, was scarcely the sort of man who could have made a master after Swift's own heart. But any irksomeness in the relation seems only to have broken out occasionally, and (in spite of the half-jocular reminiscence, 'Faith, he spoilt a fine gentleman!') Swift looked back on his residence at Moor Park (the house near Farnham in Surrey which Sir William Temple had recently acquired, and where he soon took up his abode) as fairly pleasant. At first, Swift's position was humble enough: he acted as amanuensis, and kept the household accounts.

But there was one in that circle whose name was to be linked with that of Swift in one of the saddest tales by which the annals of literary history have stirred and attracted human sympathy. In a small house in the grounds of Moor Park, there lived a Mistress Johnson, widow of a confidential servant of Sir William Temple's. She had two young daughters: and of these the elder was Esther Johnson, then eight years of age, who in her name of Stella represents to posterity the most romantic and yet the most tragic thread that runs through the life of Swift. Even in this earlier residence at Moor Park, which lasted only a year, and when Swift, 'a raw and inexperienced youth,' perhaps imagined slights and injuries which were not intended, the child seems to have attracted his attention. But either Temple was too pompous and self-satisfied to be endured, or Swift's temper was too moody to be tolerated, and this early residence soon came to an end. Swift returned for a time to Ireland; found no opening there; came back to Leicester, and remained for a time in his mother's house, and at last, after an absence of a year and a half, again took up his residence with Sir William Temple in the autumn of 1691. This time Swift's position was much improved. Both patron and dependant had doubtless come to know one another better, and to respect one another more. By Temple's help he became a graduate of Oxford: and, in his own words, 'growing into some confidence, he was often trusted with affairs of great

importance.' It was now that he saw more of the society which Moor Park could show, and his opportunities even brought him into contact with William III. The king, he tells us, taught him, in some hour of easy intercourse, how 'to cut asparagus after the Dutch fashion': and he was privileged on one occasion to expound to William's mind, unaccustomed to the intricacies of the English constitution, the expediency of withdrawing his veto from the Triennial Bill. It was this intercourse with the great 'that helped,' as Swift tells us, 'to cure him of vanity.'

But at this time in his life, Swift was also cultivating the literary faculty in a way that has a curious interest for us. 'He writ and burnt, and writ again,' he informs a friend, 'upon all manner of subjects, more than perhaps any man in England.' His reading, too, was wide and discursive, and he had abundant leisure for it. But the strangest feature of his literary activity was his being caught by the infection of a fashionable freak of taste. That 'Pindaric art' of Cowley's, which sank into oblivion within a generation after Cowley's death, was now attracting many imitators. After his example, the most obscure form of Greek poetry, the merits of which are of all others the most difficult for a modern to appreciate, was adopted as a model: and in Dr. Johnson's words, 'all the boys and girls caught the pleasing fancy, and they who could do nothing else, could write like Pindar.' Swift followed the prevailing fashion, and, with the encouragement of his patron, he wrote Pindarics on Archbishop Sancroft's non-juring fidelity, in honour of Sir William Temple, and to the Athenian Society—a pedantic gathering of projectors in the sphere of social science, the idea of which had taken rise in the whimsical brain of one John Dunton, a half-mad publisher, whose principal business in life was 'to think or perform something out of the beaten road,' and whose many escapades in literature and politics form altogether one of the strangest pictures in a strange age. But curious as was this passing episode in Swift's literary career, these Pindaric poems are not to be passed over by any one who would trace the growth of his genius. The satire, the brooding melancholy, the abhorrence of the 'lumber of the schools,' the contempt

for 'the wily shafts of state, the juggler's tricks'—are all there as in his later writings. But they are mixed up with a constant obscurity of expression as well as of thought, with a painful effort after metaphysical involvement, with a recurrence of pedantic conceits by way of metaphor, which are all strangely in contrast with Swift's later manner.

Such were the early poetic attempts which Swift, eventually the most masculine and luminous of English authors, now submitted, according to the common story, to the criticism of his kinsman Dryden, then in the plenitude of his literary dictatorship. The prophetic rebuff by which they were received, 'Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet,' was never forgotten nor forgiven by Swift.

With these early efforts we may join such occasional poems as he addressed to the king, to Congreve, and to Sir William Temple on his recovery from illness. Not one of them is without a biographical interest, or without some revelation of the development of Swift's literary genius, and no collection professing to be representative of Swift's works can omit all specimens of these. They illustrate, above all, the deep melancholy which never left him even in the most busy scenes of his life, and which had its root and groundwork in mood and character, and derived strength and confirmation in a congenital malady from which he suffered. This was caused by a structural malformation near the brain, that dulled his hearing, produced fits of giddiness and uncontrollable depression, and eventually overcame his reason. But as yet its attacks were only intermittent: and soon his genius was led into more practical and congenial lines, by the necessity of bestirring himself to make his way in larger scenes than those of Moor Park.

But Moor Park had already done much for him. It had removed him from Ireland which he cordially hated, and from that dependence on the bounty of others which had tried his spirit. It had given him leisure and opportunity for study on the lines which his own taste dictated. But more than all, it had brought him into close contact with men who had played, or were still playing, great parts in history, and had thus at once

stimulated his interest in affairs, and occasionally fed his sarcastic humour. The contrast between the greatness of the interests involved, and the smallness of many of those to whom the nation's welfare was entrusted, was first impressed upon him now, and never afterwards left him. To this early acquaintance with the practical working of State affairs Macaulay has rightly ascribed much of the vivid interest which marks off Swift's from all other political pamphlets.

But his future career was still undecided. An offer from the king of a captaincy of dragoons, had suggested one choice which would certainly have led to strange results had Swift closed with it. Sir William Temple offered a small post connected with his own sinecure office of the Rolls at Dublin. That offer was declined, as probably it was expected to be : but the fact of its having been made cleared away a scruple which Swift had conceived against entering the Church merely as a source of livelihood which could be earned in no other career. He had early turned his thoughts in this direction, and the obtaining of a degree at Oxford probably confirmed the wish. The king had given him some hopes of Church preferment, as he did not incline to a military life ; and the non-fulfilment of these hopes caused him acute disappointment some years later. It was in 1694 that his choice was made : and after another visit to his mother at Leicester, he crossed to Dublin, in some anger at what he conceived to be Temple's backwardness in rewarding his services. Before ordination, he found himself obliged, however, to apply to Temple for a certificate of good conduct during the years which had passed since he took his degree. The humble letter in which this certificate was asked for was one which it must have cost Swift a bitter pang to write ; but the request was promptly granted, and on 25th October, 1694, Swift was ordained a deacon by the Bishop of Kildare, and proceeded to priest's orders on the 13th of January, 169 $\frac{5}{4}$ . In the same month he was presented by Lord Capel to the prebend of Kilroot near Belfast. The Irish Church, when he entered her ranks, was in a condition far from flourishing : the Church of a minority, if she was able to triumph in the abasement of her Roman Catholic rival, she was yet taught to feel that by English politicians she was

expected to play the part of a submissive instrument of party supremacy, which paid as little regard to her own rights as it did to the feelings and interests of the Irish race.

His own living was a poor one, and the fact that it was placed in a district where Presbyterianism was in the ascendant, did not improve it in the eyes of Swift. The scene was a poor contrast to what he had been used to at Moor Park, and it did not detain him long. In May, 1696, he entrusted the duties to a substitute, and returned once more to his old home with Temple.

Swift had now acquired a profession and an independence, poor as it was. The months of retirement at Kilroot had enabled him to take a measure of his own powers. On this third visit to Moor Park, he came no longer as the humble servitor, but as a friend, associated with his patron in literary pursuits and controversies, and prepared to engage the attention of the world by achievements more unique and remarkable than the Pindaric verses in which he had poured out the gloom of an unsettled and restless spirit.

By this time Swift had written the *Tale of a Tub*: but this was not to be his first contribution to the prose literature of the day. He began to mix more directly in politics: and the first statesman to whom he attached himself was the veteran plotter Sunderland, then tottering to his fall. But Swift had other designs on foot: and to pursue these, he resigned altogether the living at Kilroot, which he had held for little more than a year. Before long he was to be attracted into the arena of political controversy. But now chance threw in his way an opportunity for intervening in a literary affray which exactly suited his taste. The famous struggle between the Ancients and Moderns will be dealt with more fully in another part of this volume. At present it is enough to say that Sir William Temple had found himself, by an unlucky allusion in one of his elegant but inexact essays, involved in the thickest of the fray, as a supporter of the claims of the Ancients. The combatants on the other side were numerous, and at their head stood one so well equipped for the fight as Bentley. To meet such a doughty champion of the Moderns, with his own weapons, was given to

no one then living in England. But Swift could force the battle into other lines. He could discard details, and draw it into the wider arena of human interest, where his wide-reaching humour could have free play. It was this he did, when he appeared as Temple's champion in the *Battle of the Books*—the one enduring and immortal fragment that survives to call attention to the once so hotly contested battle-field. At this period the tract—for it is little more—was written: but as yet it was only handed about amongst Temple's literary friends, and did not come before the public until a later day.

On the 27th of January, 1699, Sir William Temple died, and one period of Swift's life closed. Temple's will appointed Swift to the rather irksome post of his literary executor, a post specially thankless when the remains have been rated by the testator at a higher value than that which the world is disposed to attach to them. This was notably the case with Temple's works.

Swift had now to find other patrons, or to make his way alone. The expectations of preferment from the king were disappointed; and, in the want of anything better, Swift accepted the post of Secretary to Lord Berkeley, then proceeding to the government of Ireland. He had conceived that this appointment would lead to more: but disappointment followed disappointment, and Swift was at length compelled to accept the joint livings of Laracor, Agher, and Rathbeggan in Meath, which yielded him, in all, an income of some £200 a year. He continued, however, to form one of Lord Berkeley's household, and by more than one *jeu d'esprit* in his most playful manner, he proves that disappointment did not prevent this residence being a time of cheerfulness. 'Parson Swift' was the chartered satirist of the company, and retained, in much later years, the intimacy with the family which was then established. Before he returned with Lord Berkeley to England, in 1701, Swift took the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Just at this moment, a violent struggle was in progress between the Whigs and the Tories. Jealousy of William's Dutch favourites, of the King's attachment to his native country, and the prospect of England's being involved in foreign war for the

sake of that country, had inflamed the popular feeling to such an extent as to give the Tories, then in opposition, an admirable opportunity for attack upon the Whig ministers. In February 1701 an election had given the Tories a decisive majority in the Commons. A violent attack upon William's Partition Treaty followed, and an impeachment was resolved upon against Lord Somers, the Earl of Portland, the Earl of Orford, and Lord Halifax. They were the statesmen of the Whig party who stood highest in character, in ability, and in personal attachment to the King: and the blow struck at them was in reality aimed at William, and was inspired by not a little Jacobite intent. The situation was now at its worst, and none could foretell to what extravagances party rancour might proceed. At this juncture Swift arrived. His first direct intervention in political strife was as the anonymous author of a tract, *On the Dissensions at Athens and Rome*, which drew a parallel between the existing state of things and some of the violent outbursts by which the Athenians and the Romans made wreck of their liberties.

The Tory triumph was short-lived. The acknowledgment of the Pretender by Louis XIV roused all the Anti-Catholic fervour of the nation. William found himself once more hailed as the Saviour of the People. He could safely appeal to the polling booths: and a new election in November 1701, made that party triumphant whose leaders Swift had likened to the loftiest characters in Athenian and Roman history. His authorship, at first doubtful, and then, it would appear, generally recognised, secured for Swift friends of power in the dominant faction, and he might reasonably have cherished the hope of rapid and secure advancement.

Swift returned to his home in Ireland in the autumn of 1701; and it marks his sense that Ireland was, for some years at least, to be his permanent abiding-place, that, by his persuasion, Esther Johnson, and her companion, Rebecca Dingley, came over to Ireland to reside in his neighbourhood, and to continue that bond of untiring and unselfish affection which was to link the name of Stella for ever with that of Swift, in a tie that was not less close than it was mysterious.



The church and vicarage of Laracor, which now became Swift's home, were situated about a mile and a half from the prosperous town of Trim, in West Meath. There was little in the neighbourhood to attract Swift, and his congregation numbered only about half-a-score—'most gentle and all simple,' as he has himself described them. The great majority of the humbler classes were Roman Catholics, but Swift felt no such bitter feelings against them as the Presbyterians about Kilroot, aggressive in the confidence of Whig support, had inspired in him. A few friends, such as Dr. Raymond of Trim, formed, with Esther Johnson and her companion, his circle of acquaintance. He busied himself with improvements in his garden and his fish canal—which perhaps recalled to him the associations of Moor Park: but the scene was scarcely such as could afford employment to a temperament like his. He was back in England on another visit in the spring of 1702, to find that, with the accession of Queen Anne, the Tories had recovered power. Interest therefore combined with Swift's own inclinations to make him sit lightly towards his short-lived alliance with the Whigs. The Whigs had offended him by their scarcely concealed opposition to the Church claims; the Tories satisfied him by their abundant concessions to these claims, which Swift felt it part of his duty as a clergyman at all times to maintain. There was not, indeed, as yet, any formal breach between him and the Whig party, who showed him abundance of civility. But Swift speaks bitterly of the excess of party feeling: and such bitterness was with Swift, as it commonly is with other men, symptomatic of a decline in party allegiance.

It was during a visit to London, in 1704, that Swift gave to the public a volume containing not only the *Battle of the Books*, which had already been handed about amongst Temple's friends, but another work destined to make a greater mark in literature and to have a greater influence upon his own future—the *Tale of a Tub*. It was the first work in which Swift's genius had full play, and in which the enormous sweep of his satire is conspicuous. This is not the place for a minute description of the book: but it is enough for the biographer of Swift to point out that the allegory of the three brothers, who typify the three

modern forms of Christianity, forms a small part of the whole. The satire is really directed against the foibles of humanity as a whole—foibles which reappear in each new age and under various guises, and which make pride ridiculous even at the moment when it is most convinced of its own superiority to the weakness which it readily detects in others. It shows in perfection Swift's marvellous power of sustained satire, overwhelming in its contempt at once the more obvious follies and the wit that would fain despise these follies. Those who aspire to fame, and those who are its arbiters; those who miss and those who attain it; the dull and the stupid, as well as the Wit-woulds who look down upon them; the sceptics and the fanatics—all are alike brought to the bar of judgment, and dismissed with a sentence whose severity is merged in its scathing contempt—even as in his own verses on the *Day of Judgment*, Swift pictures Jove as dismissing the crowd of sinners from the judgment-seat, with a sneer at the absurdity which could suppose that Jove would trouble himself to damn such a sorry crowd.

The *Tale of a Tub*, which appeared in 1704, could scarcely fail to attract attention; and Swift soon found that his audience was a large one. The wider range of the satire could scarcely, in any age, attract popular attention. But it is one of the peculiarities of Swift's satire that its more obvious points have made it popular even with those who could scarcely be expected to grasp its whole meaning. So it is that the *Travels of Gulliver*—the bitterest satire ever penned upon human nature—has become the companion of children in every succeeding age: and so, in 1704, those who were blind to the deeper allusions and the more savage cynicism of the *Tale of a Tub*, were attracted by the more salient and obvious parallels which he drew. The story of Peter, Martin and Jack, is droll enough in itself, but poor when it is compared with the digressions: yet it attracted a popular audience and became current in the mouths of men. Unfortunately for Swift, it was just the part of his work which was most calculated to give offence. Those who saw the most solemn truths of religion treated as a jest, were not likely to have their regard for Swift as a clergyman increased, and

Swift's worldly prospects suffered from the belief in his authorship which soon became widely spread. It was a part of that trait in Swift's character—his strange callousness to the feelings of other men—that led him here to offend, almost unconsciously, the deepest religious feeling, just as it allowed him, in another sphere, to stain his works with a coarseness, which is all the more noisome because it is absolutely apathetic.

The book appeared anonymously, and in some quarters the authorship was held as doubtful. But such doubts did not prevail very long, or very widely, and their renewal in later years, by Dr. Johnson in a casual conversation, serves rather as an instance of literary paradox than as an expression of deliberate judgment. It is clear that very soon after its publication, Swift was credited with the book, and its authorship, according to a very probable story, injured his prospects of promotion in the Church. Swift was always indignant at the charge of irreverence brought against him. He was probably unconscious of the offence contained in that part of his book which had drawn the charge upon him: but, be that as it may, he no doubt hesitated to put forward too decisively his claims to the authorship of a work which had acquired such a reputation.

Meanwhile, in the political world, changes were going on which were destined greatly to affect Swift's relations to the Whig party. Toryism was losing its influence: the Government, under the influence of Godolphin and Marlborough, was gradually becoming more Whiggish in character. In England the Tories had failed to carry the Bill against Occasional Conformity, which was intended to increase the influence of the Church; in Ireland, the Whig influence was dominant, and there also the Church was made to suffer. The Ministry were strengthened by the renown of Marlborough's victories, and the new election of 1705 gave them a strong majority. But the struggle between the two parties turned now chiefly on those privileges of the Church of which Swift was a consistent defender. Previous ties, and the uncertainty of the future, might prevent him for the time from breaking his party connexion: but undoubtedly by this time the elements of a breach were present. As yet, however, there was no such alienation as

rendered Swift's intercourse with his Whig friends impossible : he was on terms of the closest intimacy with Addison and Congreve, and the advice of the former was frequently followed in those lighter pieces, such as the poem of *Baucis and Philemon*, which now came from his pen. No man had less of the irritable vanity of authorship, which resents criticism, than Swift.

As the Ministry became more strong, their Whig leanings became more pronounced, and their attitude of hostility to the High Church party was more declared. In 1707, the Earl of Pembroke, whose attitude is most clearly shown by the fact that he was the patron of Locke, was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland ; and though Swift remained on friendly terms with the Castle, he must have been offended by the policy which promised the abolition of tests because they were irksome to the Presbyterians. At the close of the same year, Swift went to England on a mission to secure certain pecuniary benefits to his Church : but however civilly he was received, he found that the mission advanced little under the auspices of a Whig government. His irritation was increased by his failure to secure the appointment of the Bishopric of Waterford ; and Swift, however magnanimous in his surrender of literary fame, was almost morbidly bitter on the subject of his own neglect in the way of ecclesiastical preferment.

Just as his personal grounds for irritation were strongest, the Whig attitude of the Government became more pronounced. The alarm of an invasion on behalf of the Pretender enabled them to cast off all disguise. The Ministry was purged of Tories ; and in the shuffle of offices, Lord Wharton, whose principles were notoriously adverse to the Church, and whose character was that of a professed libertine, was appointed to succeed Pembroke as Governor of Ireland. That the Test was to be abolished was sufficiently distasteful to Swift, but that this was to be accomplished by one whose life was openly scandalous, increased his wrath. In December, 1708, he wrote the *Letter on the Sacramental Test*, which really amounted to a declaration of war against the Whigs. It is the first of those tracts in which Swift's skill in political controversy was fully

displayed. There are three other tracts, belonging to the same period in his life, which all show the same attitude of anger towards that complacent and superficial latitudinarianism which he now identified with the Whigs and with their ecclesiastical allies. These are the *Argument against Abolishing Christianity*, the *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, and the *Sentiments of a Church of England Man*.

It was at this juncture in Swift's life that the Government, whose supremacy was already a good deal shaken by the tediousness of a war that seemed to be pursued much more for the interests of the Allies than for that of England, gave an advantage to their opponents by a signal act of folly. Dr. Sacheverell, of St. Saviour's, Southwark, who had already obtained a certain notoriety as a preacher of somewhat tawdry eloquence, delivered a sermon on the 15th of November, 1709, before the Lord Mayor, in which he reflected, in no obscure terms, upon the Ministry, and especially upon Godolphin. He boldly attacked them as insidious foes of the Church, and called upon the nation to rally to its defence. The ferment which the sermon created, when printed, would soon have been forgotten had not the Ministers determined to give Sacheverell the gratuitous advertisement of prosecution. His trial became the centre of all interest : and the preacher became the object of an adulation which he certainly in no way merited, but which served as a rallying-point for all the friends of the Church. Marlborough's ambition, and his wife's overweening pride, had alienated the Queen, and her feelings now coincided with the change in the attitude of the populace. In despair of any other policy, the Ministers became still more eager in prosecuting the war, and more decided in resisting any overtures for peace. Swift returned to England in September, 1710, to find that Godolphin was dismissed and Parliament on the eve of dissolution, and that the staunch Tory, Robert Harley, was named Chancellor of the Exchequer.

At first the Whigs, as he says himself, were 'ravished to see him,' and received him with every appearance of civility. But Swift valued little these professions of 'declining courtiers.' The Tories were making overtures ; 'he could make his fortune,'

as they hinted, 'if he pleased': 'but,' he adds, 'I do not understand them—or rather—I do understand them.' Conviction, interest, and personal irritation all moved him one way: and that way was soon chosen. On the 4th of October, 1710, he was 'brought privately to Mr. Harley, who received him with the greatest respect and kindness imaginable.' Swift was not impervious to the flattery of men in high station, however much his real inferiors: and at this interview the die was cast. Swift entered upon his task as the chief defender of the Queen's new Ministers.

The change involved no surrender of principle. Swift's early associations had led him naturally towards the Whigs: but his temperament never allowed him to have any close sympathy with them. His Irish experience had developed the lack of sympathy into positive dislike. The neglect of his petition on behalf of the Irish Church gave him ground for umbrage, and personal ingratitude, or what he deemed to be such, had embittered this feeling. Accidental circumstances brought to Swift, at this moment, a tempting opportunity for change: and he responded to the overtures of Harley with no thought that any sacrifice of conscience or of independence was involved therein.

He was speedily plunged deep in the business of defence. The Ministry, as he himself expressed it, 'stood upon a narrow isthmus.' They were attacked with natural rancour by the Whigs: but the tide of Tory feeling, exaggerated in its strength, was in itself an equal danger. It might easily carry them upon quicksands where they would be wrecked. Swift had, therefore, not only to meet the attacks of the defeated foe, but to moderate the enthusiasm of unwise adherents. He saw the chief hope of the Ministry to lie in the formation of a national party, midway between extremes, and appealing to the broad sympathies of the people. The Church and her defence was to be a rallying cry: but this was to be strengthened by the protection of the national welfare, by the encouragement of the landed interest, and by consistent opposition to the monied class which was thriving on the national debt, and which Swift represented as rejoicing in the continuance of a war which it was England's best policy

to bring to a close. He maintained the fight in the pages of the *Examiner*, a paper to which he continued to write from November, 1710, to June of the next year. During that period the paper became the chief political organ of the day. The successful fight which Swift maintained tided the Ministry over the critical period when they were still new to power: and the gratitude due to such a defender made Swift the chosen intimate and confidential adviser of Harley, St. John, and the Lord Chancellor, Harcourt.

Accident confirmed the success which Swift's pen had done so much to secure. A foreign adventurer, named Guiscard, who had intrigued alternately with French and English, and whose profligate life had brought him into some contact with St. John, had obtained, through the influence of the new Secretary of State, a pension from the Crown. It was insufficient, however, to extricate him from overwhelming money difficulties: and, beginning again his course of political intrigue, he was arrested on a suspicion of treason. Driven to frenzy, the poor wretch, during his examination before the Privy Council, attacked and wounded Harley. The wound and its consequences to Harley's health were sufficiently serious to produce an illness of some duration; and although the incident had no possible political bearing, it was enough to increase Harley's popularity, and to establish more securely that success which the Ministry had, by Swift's help, already attained. It bound Swift to Harley by the new tie of solicitude for one by whom he had been kindly treated and for whom he had done much: and Swift became even more closely identified with the Ministry than he had hitherto been.

Harley 'had grown,' as Swift puts it, 'by persecutions, turnings out, and stabbings.' His influence was now, to all appearance, supreme: he was created Earl of Oxford, and immediately afterwards was named Lord Treasurer. His powers as a statesman were very limited, and scarcely extended beyond the art of political intrigue and the adroit management of party. He was hesitating in action, and confused in thought: but Swift valued him partly from his personal kindness to himself, and partly as the opponent of those against whom he was now feeling the utmost bitterness. Often as he was forced to chafe at lost opportunities,

and at the intrusion of petty motives into great affairs, Swift never visited upon his patron, either in word or in action, the provocation he felt.

It is hard to say whether the world has gained or lost more by Swift's engrossment, during three or four years, in the conduct of affairs. Undoubtedly it prevented the exercise of his genius in its most characteristic employment: and none of his greatest works dates from this time. But on the other hand, it enormously developed his knowledge of the world and of human motives: it sharpened his sarcastic incisiveness and extended his grasp of all forms of human baseness and folly: and it may be doubted whether Gulliver could ever have been written had Swift not for some years stood where he commanded a view, at once comprehensive and minute, into the mechanism of public affairs. It is most certain that the Drapier letters, which have, by their living force, kept alive the memory of an obscure and unimportant episode of Irish politics, would have lost half their raciness had they not been inspired by the sting of party feeling which the experience of these four years of Queen Anne's reign had left rankling in Swift's mind.

But in the course of this period, Swift has left one monument, which he would not himself have recognised as of any literary value, but which the world, most assuredly, will never allow to die. This is the *Journal to Stella*: a continuous series of letters in which he depicts, for her who, in all his busy and bustling surroundings, ever occupied the place closest to his heart, the scenes in which he moved. Half the charm of the *Journal* lies in its absolute ease and unconsciousness of effort; in the humour alternately playful and sarcastic, in the pathos and the anger, in the fierce self-assertion which would not conceal itself, in the fidelity which made his genius the willing servant of smaller men who played the part of his patrons—in a word, in all those varying traits which reflect Swift's character so exactly, and which let us see him at once in his pride, and in his tenderness, in his power, and in his weakness. We see him as the confidant of ministers, and the dispenser of patronage: as the frequenter of the Court, and the companion of the great, and, again, as the boon companion of the victors and the vanquished



in the world of letters ; as the friend of Addison, of Congreve, of Atterbury, of Arbuthnot, of Pope ; as the protector of Parnell and others more obscure who had fallen into misfortune : and as the fierce combatant, who enjoyed recounting his triumphs to the one listener, so far removed, for whom all that affected him was the first interest of life.

The struggle which the Ministry were maintaining now turned on one absorbing question, that of Peace or War. The conduct of the war had not only carried on the traditions which the Whigs had received from William III, but had also shed lustre on that party by the victories of Marlborough. But these victories had, of late, been less conspicuous, and it was difficult to see how English interests were any longer involved in maintaining the cause of an aspirant to the Spanish throne whose claims were opposed by the voice of almost all the Spaniards, and whose accession would disturb the balance of power almost as seriously as that of Philip, the member of the Bourbon family whom we had spent so much treasure and so many lives to keep from a throne to which he was called by preponderating national feeling in the Spanish peninsula. The monied classes appeared to find their advantage in the war, and in the large extension it was giving to the national debt : but the landed classes found no profit to themselves in pursuing a contest in which the interests of our allies seemed to be so much more involved than our own. Much national feeling thus supported the Tory Ministers in their wish to bring to an end a war which was their inheritance from their predecessors, which was troublesome and costly, and the continuance of which would weigh in favour of the Whigs.

In the autumn of 1711 there appeared the most important contribution to the controversy which was now dividing the nation, on the subject of Peace or War. This was Swift's *Conduct of the Allies*. It was the most powerful political tract which he had yet written : and little as it is burdened with facts or statistics, it is clear that Swift had made abundant and careful use of the official documents which had been placed at his command. These gave to the pamphlet much of its strength and telling force : but its chief quality is the unrelenting in-

dignation with which it is inspired, and which is all the more telling from the rapidity with which it was written. Its first note is struck when he appeals from the 'Echo of the London Coffee-house' to the 'Voice of the Nation.' 'We have been principals,' he says, 'when we ought to have been auxiliaries: we have fought where we ought not, and have abstained where our interests were at stake: we have allowed those allies, who charge us with deserting them, to be false to every engagement made with us. We have persevered, until we lie under the burden of fifty millions of debt. We have gained victories, which have brought to us nothing but barren renown, and now we are expiring "of a hundred good symptoms."' The blind prosecution of a war that cost us much, but brought us nothing, he ascribes to the rapacious greed of Marlborough: to the grasping of the monied classes, to the anxiety of the Whig clique to cling to emolument and office. 'We, the Tories, are the faithful steward, resolved to put an end to the thoughtless extravagance of a young heir, whose folly had been encouraged, until now, by venal agents.' The suspicions of a plot in favour of Marlborough, to which popular credence was given, helped Swift in pressing home his points. But the Ministry was weak in the House of Lords; and there very serious opposition had to be met. Swift was almost ready to despair. But Oxford maintained his outward coolness, and events seemed to justify it. The unpopularity of Marlborough increased: and on the 30th of December he was deprived of his appointments. The creation of new peers secured for the Ministers a majority in the House of Lords, and Swift and those whom he supported breathed more freely in the downfall of their most formidable enemy.

The negotiations for peace now proceeded more rapidly; and as the crisis approached, the bitterness of party feeling, in which Swift was deeply involved, continued to increase. Baffled in the struggle, the Whigs sought to prove that the Peace was only a convenient cloak for such concessions to France as might bring about a Jacobite restoration. So far as Swift, at least, was concerned, any thought of such a restoration was entirely imaginary: but he repudiated what was untrue so far as he was personally concerned, with too much confidence as

on the eve of an election where the battle of the Ministers and their opponents was to be fought out. The Tories stood upon their loyalty to Church and Crown, upon the blessings of peace, and upon the cheap commodities which their Commercial Treaty had made possible : the Whigs murmured of betrayal to France, burned effigies of the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender, recalled the victories of Marlborough, and appealed to the selfishness of the monied class, whose interest in the funds, they asserted, was threatened, so long as the Ministry remained in office. The result gave a large majority to the Tories, and Swift's pen was now brought in to confirm the victory. Steele was the first to feel the edge of his weapon. In order to inflame men's minds against the Ministers, Steele wrote a pamphlet on *The Importance of Dunkirk*, in which he professed to expose the treachery which had enabled the French king to elude the terms of the Treaty by which he was required to destroy the fortifications of that town. Swift answered in a tract called the *Importance of the Guardian*, which paid off his scores against Steele : and a reply from Steele, in the *Crisis*, drew from Swift by far the greatest monument of the fray, in the *Public Spirit of the Whigs*.

But however Swift might maintain the struggle, the clouds were gathering round the prospect of his friends. The health of the Queen was precarious, and the Ministers seemed to have lost all clear and definite policy. Their dissensions were becoming more and more bitter. Vexed and dispirited, Swift retired, first to Berkshire, and then to Ireland. He was tired to death, so he says, 'of Courts and Ministers'; but what oppressed him was not only the ruin impending over the cause for which he had striven, but also the thought that he was now parting, perhaps for life, from those with whom he had held most pleasant converse. He writes to Arbuthnot, whose wit, humour, and practical philosophy brought him closest to Swift's heart, in a strain of bitter grief. 'Writing to you much would make me stark mad. Judge his condition who has nothing to keep him from being miserable but endeavouring to forget those for whom he has the greatest value, love, and friendship. . . . Adieu, and love me half so well as I do you.'

Swift's prognostications of failure were soon realized. The quarrel between Oxford and Bolingbroke became more and more violent: and at length Bolingbroke succeeded in driving his rival from power. His own triumph was short-lived. The Lord Treasurer resigned on the 27th of July, 1714. But on the 1st of August the Queen died, having, with her dying breath, committed the Treasurer's staff to the Duke of Shrewsbury. The hopes of the Tories were shattered at one blow: and with the Hanoverian succession the Whig party entered upon a lease of power that lasted for more than a generation.

With the fall of his friends a crisis in Swift's life was reached. For four years he had been absorbed in party struggles, which had torn him from all the work for which his genius was uniquely fitted. The result had been no satisfaction to himself: he was involved in constant and harassing contentions, which he often despised, and his efforts had brought him little even of outward reward. But, hard as these four years had been, and bitterly as he spoke of the retrospect, they had done much to ripen his genius. His had been a strange experience. With a spirit morbidly gloomy and wayward, and a saturnine humour that spared not even his own deeper feelings or higher aspirations, it was impossible for Swift to pursue one constant aim, or to follow one single path. Powers such as his would certainly have carried him far in worldly success on any chosen career: but the mood and humour that wrapped these powers in their own cloak, and covered them with their own gloom and waywardness, forbade him any such beaten track. Now, having reached middle age, he had passed through successive phases which had indeed ripened his genius by their very variety, but which had also confirmed the waywardness which made that genius work in paths that were not those of other men. Nurtured in dependence he had caught from that hated experience a will that was stubborn even to tyranny. Having employed his earliest thoughts with brooding over metaphysical problems and endeavouring to pierce into the hidden meaning of things, he had thrown this pursuit aside after producing a few involved and amorphous verses, and the memory of these early broodings only gave edge to his satire on the vanity of human speculation,

and added a special feature to his humour in that occasional travesty of philosophical thought, which he handles so lightly, but which gives a meaning so deep to the scorn with which he regards all human things. In the *Tale of a Tub* he had indulged the full exuberance of his genius, but powerful as had been its attraction, the result upon his readers had been that of doubt and wonder and distrust, rather than cordial admiration. He spent no time or thought over measuring his powers or nursing his genius, but threw himself, with the eagerness of one who sought a new outlet, into the troubled waters of politics. His early life with Sir William Temple had given him some insight into affairs: and to take an active and leading part therein seemed to stifle his broodings, and to give that rest which his spirit could find only in constant employment. Angrily as he viewed these later years, when he looked back upon the fruitlessness of his efforts, it may be doubted whether for Swift himself they were not the happiest of his life. The rush of business; the sense of influence; the excitement of constant intercourse with men who, for good or ill, were making history; the ardour of the fight; and, perhaps more than all, the close and intimate meetings with those whose genius he felt most akin to his own, such as Arbuthnot and Pope—all these made Swift less morbid during these years than at any period of his life. We may grudge the time stolen from the special exercise of gifts which are unique in all our literature: we may doubt the wisdom of the part Swift played, or we may differ from the judgment which he formed upon the affairs of the time. But we cannot deny that his experience then not only developed a new side of a genius whose variety has been rarely equalled, but also contributed some brightness to a life which was for the most part steeped in gloom.

Henceforward Swift's home was Ireland: and where he did not take all humanity for his theme, it was in the affairs of Ireland that he found material for his pen. From the first he looked forward to this banishment—for such it was to his mind—as in all probability permanent. The prospect plunged him in deep gloom, and the reception with which he met did not tend to lighten that gloom. He was suspected, as all those are

apt to be who were the close adherents of a fallen ministry. In Ireland the Whigs had a strong body of followers: and these were ready to involve Swift in the charge of Jacobitism which was now brought against the members of Queen Anne's last ministry. He was made the mark for all sorts of ribaldry and insult, and found few sympathisers in his bitter opposition to the new administration. But as time went on the prospect became brighter: Swift's interests were again aroused: and, above all, the action of the Government drove many to sympathise with Swift who had before stood aloof from him.

The evils under which Ireland suffered—evils in part economical, but aggravated, if not caused, by centuries of English misgovernment—were now becoming ever more and more acute. With her landlords absent, spending their rents in England, and grinding their tenants through merciless agents; with her offices filled, so far as the drawing of emoluments was concerned, by absentees; with her commerce crippled by unjust restrictions imposed by the English Parliament; torn by religious divisions which separated the nation into the hostile camps of the persecuted Roman Catholics who hated the dominant Church, and of an Established Church which was forced to wear a political livery; with masses of her population sunk in depths of poverty that were seed-beds of crime—Ireland presented a picture of misery and misgovernment that gave point to the denunciations of all who sought to attack the English administration. Hatred of the Whigs was undoubtedly Swift's first motive for becoming the champion of Ireland. But the conduct of the Whigs soon made the part of the Irish patriot coincide exactly with that of the bitter opponent of the Whig ministry: and it gave union and compactness to parties which before had been separated and suspicious of one another. It was in 1720 that this united Irish party was first formed, not as a political organisation, but under the stress of indignation which the wrongs inflicted by England had produced. Swift's first contribution to the battle for Irish rights was his pamphlet, *A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufactures*. It gave voice to the bitter feeling of the hardship done to Ireland by the unjust restrictions placed on her commerce by English greed and selfishness. As a means

of reprisal Swift proposes to refuse anything that comes from England. Every product of England is to be burned when it reaches Ireland, except her people and her coals. On this theme he enlarges with a concentrated strength of sarcasm and invective that transcends all his previous political pamphlets. Swift was not now writing as the spokesman of a triumphant party, but was giving voice to the wrongs of the country where he had found refuge as a banished and denounced man. The bitterness of personal feeling was added to the keenness of the political partisan : and the indignation inherent in Swift against all forms of oppression gave additional force to his pen.

The Whig Government were unaccustomed to such vigour from a country where habit had made them think their influence to be invulnerable ; and they were foolish enough to strike at the author through the printer of the tract. The Chief Justice Whiteshed, an obedient Whig partisan, presided when the bill was presented against the printer : and when the Grand Jury hesitated to find a true bill, he overcame their scruples. At the trial the jury refused to convict, and even Whiteshed's bullying failed to conquer their stubbornness. The Government attempted to renew the prosecution, but were at length compelled to desist.

Swift had now entered on a new chapter in his life, and found a work which revived his powers, and for a time dispelled his gloom. He became the centre of an Irish party—if that may rightly be called so, which really was a party formed by those Englishmen who had permanent settlements in Ireland, as against those who knew, or were interested in, her solely as the source of their own salaries, or as a means of increasing the influence of their own party by favour or by patronage dispensed at her cost. But that party soon became stronger, and acquired popular support, even from those lower classes amongst whom it roused the instinct of national feeling, little as they were concerned with the struggles of English faction. The opportunity was given by the folly and corruption of the English Government. A patent for the issue of a copper coinage was given to one William Wood, in 1722. Its extent and conditions were not justified by anything in the state of Irish currency,

and it was accompanied by every circumstance which could kindle national prejudice against it. Wood was to make a large profit : and besides all the usual blackmail levied by the officials of the day, a bribe of no less than £10,000 was to be paid by him to the King's mistress, the Duchess of Kendal. Neither the Lord Lieutenant, nor the Irish Privy Council, nor the Irish Parliament, was consulted on the subject ; and an outburst of popular indignation made inquiry necessary. While this was being conducted with what was only a show of business, Swift made himself the mouthpiece of the popular anger. In the character of M. B. Drapier, a shopman of Dublin, he published a letter to the Irish people, magnifying the scandal of the transaction, and picturing its probable results : and boldly calling on them to resist a stretch of the prerogative in which the King's name was only used by those who were as false to his service as they were indifferent to the rights of Ireland. A second and a third letter followed, making an even more vigorous claim for Irish independence : and in 1724, he addressed 'To the Whole People of Ireland' a fourth letter, which called on Ireland to wrench her independence from the hands of a government rotten with corruption. The fiction of a 'depending kingdom' must be cast aside. With Wood's patent must also disappear the whole system of deception, and dishonesty, and callous indifference to the wishes or the welfare of Ireland, of which the Patent granted to Wood was only one trifling example. Wood was almost forgotten in the fury of Swift's attack upon the English Government and all that it represented.

The nation was now stirred to its depths, and what had at first been an agitation of a small clique of English origin, was swelled into a popular revolt against the whole theory of Ireland's position upon which the Whig Government seemed resolved to proceed. It shows the enormous power of Swift's satire, that he, English himself by all but the accident of his place of birth, hating Ireland and longing to quit her shores, the adherent of a Church which was that of a trifling minority, and speaking for a small (although influential) class, gathered to his side the whole national instinct of the Irish mob, Catholic as well as Protestant, and inspired in the English Government



so much dread of armed rebellion, that they felt themselves compelled once more to proceed against his printer. But again Whiteshed's attempts to serve the cause of his masters were foiled. The bill was thrown out; the city celebrated the triumph of their hero: he who had been a few years before received in Dublin with jeers and insults, became the object of unquestioning worship. The Government found themselves defeated and discredited. Wood's half-pence were withdrawn: the prosecution was abandoned: and the retreat was arranged with as little loss of dignity as might be. Walpole, however, though defeated for the moment, abandoned none of his plans. The government of Ireland was still to be in the hands of his most obedient partisans. All was to be arranged with the sole end of promoting English influence. The Church was to be made the tool and sign of subjection. Its rivals were to be encouraged, in order that it might attain no dangerous influence in the nation. The very notion of the independency of the kingdom, which had shewn such threatening power of asserting itself, was to be steadily and surely undermined. For this purpose Dr. Hugh Boulter, the Bishop of Bristol, was made Primate of Ireland: and for nineteen years—covering more than all the years of Swift's active work—this obedient henchman of Walpole exercised all his ingenuity and his industry in promoting the influence of English agents, and in killing at the root that spirit which Swift had galvanized into a momentary show of energy.

But Swift, before this Irish struggle closed, was turning his thoughts to England. He had now composed the larger portion of his next great work: and he was longing to share in the literary projects of such friends as Pope, Bolingbroke, Gay, and Arbuthnot. In March, 1726, he returned to the old circle. Bolingbroke was back from his banishment: Pope was at the height of his fame, and just about to issue the *Dunciad*: Gay was meditating the *Beggar's Opera*: and Arbuthnot was scheming the plan of a joint and wide-reaching satire which was to be published under the name of *Scriblerus*. Swift's spirits revived with the welcome which greeted him. He was soon engaged with all the literary projects of his friends: and

Gulliver's Travels, over which he had spent some of the years of his banishment, was prepared for publication. His visit lasted but a short time: he left in August of the same year: and in November, Gulliver appeared. In its range the widest of all his works, in its humour one of the most playful, and in its deeper points of satire the most profoundly melancholy, it represents Swift at the height of his power and in the plenitude of his experience. It was greeted by such a burst of applause as had attended no other of Swift's works, and the misgivings which he had felt as to the continuance of his powers were quickly dispelled. But old age and ill-health were creeping upon him. He had found little satisfaction in any renewal of his old relation with English politics. Fears of increasing illness and of mental failure could not be dispelled, and were deepening his constitutional melancholy. The health of Stella was causing him acute anxiety: and he felt himself unfit for the old intercourse with the wits, that had been so full of zest for him before. He returned once more to England in April, 1727: and in September of that year he quitted her shores for the last time, and finally settled in that country which was his by birth, for whose rights he did such yeoman service, but whose soil he continued to the end to hate so bitterly. To him Ireland was ever a place of banishment: and to end his days there was 'to die like a poisoned rat in a hole.'

The remaining facts of Swift's life are easily given in outline. His return to Ireland was soon followed by the death of Stella, which cut off the chief source of comfort to his life. Henceforward the decline in the interests and ties that bound him to the world was rapid. He interfered no further in English politics, except to send occasional words of sympathy to the leaders of opposition, and to greet the rising star of Pulteney, who was Walpole's chief opponent, as one 'who had preserved the spirit of liberty,' and 'had resisted the corruption of politics.' But in Ireland, broken as he was, he occupied a position that was unique, and that might well have satisfied his pride. He was the acknowledged leader of a party that might fairly claim to be national, although it had originated in the discontent felt by a comparatively small class, against a class that was still

smaller. He continued to publish pamphlets on the wrongs of Ireland: and while others were probing her ills, and discussing remedies, Swift gave the impulse to national feeling, and kept its bitterness alive against the little English garrison commanded by Archbishop Boulter. His pamphlets on the state of Ireland culminated in that most widely known tract, *A modest Proposal for preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from being a burden to their Parents in the Country*, which, in its concentrated humour, cynicism, and pity, is singularly characteristic of Swift. He found time and strength also for some vigorous blows on behalf of his Church: and it was in 1736, while he was engaged on a poem satirising the Irish Parliament (which had interfered with her privileges) under the name of the 'Legion Club,' that his illness, in its final and most crushing form, overtook him. A few years more of almost unbroken gloom were left to Swift: but his state at last fell into one of utter helplessness and isolation, interrupted by fits of frenzy and violence, and by attacks of terrible agony of pain. Finally he sank into absolute mental apathy: and death released him only on the 19th of October, 1745.

We have thus glanced at the chief phases of Swift's life: his early days of penury and dependence: his service with Sir William Temple, leading him, as his position in the household advanced, into close contact with great affairs. We have seen him in early days with powers undiscovered and uncontrolled, devoting himself to a species of poetry as obscure in thought as it was involved in expression. His earliest success as a writer was obtained while he was a member of the Whig party: but that party offended him by neglect of his Church, and he plunged into the vortex of political controversy as the avowed and trusty ally of the Tory Government. On the fall of that Government he retired to the Deanery, which had been given him as the reward for his political service: and arriving in Ireland as a discredited partizan, he soon recovered his position, and became the idol of the people, and the undisputed leader of a national party. He returned to the company of his old literary associates for two short visits, and during these he produced the most sweeping of his satires, in the *Travels of Gulliver*: and finally

his life closed in Ireland, where he was looked upon as the foremost assertor of her wrongs. He had in his time played many parts. The fierce controversialist, the merciless satirist, the gloomy cynic, had another side to his character, which has given it an undying interest in the dramatic contrast of light and shade. To his friends he was a centre of attraction. The fierce anger of the fight could always be laid aside for the light playfulness of humour, and for the warmth of a sympathetic affection. Lonely, disappointed, weighed down by his consuming scorn for much that he saw around him, he yet clung to the love of his friends, and was almost blind to their faults. Chiefly under the influence of a self-torturing cynicism, he had darkened his own life by involving his chief affection in mystery; but to two women he had nevertheless been the very centre of their life, and to one of these he was bound by a tie of old and faithful affection which was broken only by death. Over Hester Vanhomrigh, as over Esther Johnson, he had gained an overpowering influence as guide, philosopher, and friend. But while Vanessa, as he playfully called the former, unwilling to efface herself, and mistaking their relations, became the object of Swift's anger and contempt, so Stella, accepting the mysterious limits placed upon their union by Swift, and content to live only for what love he had to give her, earned his profound respect and friendship, and by her death left him a lonely and comfortless man. His relations to his literary and political friends were the more close and cordial, because he had himself so little of those small jealousies that are apt to pervade such circles. He could bear with the petty vanity of Pope; he clung to Addison in spite of party differences; encouraged the helplessness of Gay; and condoned the ostentation and insincerity that marred the brilliancy of Bolingbroke. Imperious in his attitude towards his fellow-men, disdainful of human foibles, he yet forgot his harshness and his scorn in his love of those who were his chosen friends.

In Swift's attitude towards religion there is much that is characteristic of his age, but not a little that is peculiar to himself. In his hatred of avowed scepticism, in his intolerance of all that would lessen the influence of the established religion

as a system of police, in his angry repudiation of all charges of freethinking, Swift was partly true to his own conviction, but partly also reflected what was one of the chief traits of the religious apathy of his time. In some respects his position, in this regard, is not very different from that assumed by those whom posterity has justly agreed to reckon as typical free-thinkers—by Bolingbroke, by Pope, by Chesterfield. But Swift did not accompany it, as they did, by a dallying with tenets subversive of the fundamental positions of Christianity. The notion of his duty, as a faithful servant of his own Church, doubtless helped to maintain Swift's rigid adherence to her principles, and his conviction of the social dangers of scepticism gave sincerity to his defence of these principles: but the real motive of his refusal to admit any tampering with accepted religious tenets lay much deeper, and had its foundation in his contempt for his fellow-creatures. The narrow range of human knowledge, the scanty power of discerning truth, the slight influence which truth ever had in determining human action, or in withstanding human passions,—all these made him treat religious speculation as a species of morbid vanity, and made him find in accepted dogma, if not the real key to the problems of life, at least one which might serve the sorry crew, who were eager for any new or schismatical doctrine, as a means of satisfying their whims or flattering their self-conceit. The weapon of Swift's orthodoxy is always ridicule, never exhortation. Because the religion of our fathers is not good enough for the fools of to-day, are we to change every year or month, to suit each new caprice? This is, in effect, his argument against any scheme of 'Comprehension,' the watchword so dear to the latitudinarians of his day. But while in certain aspects this contemptuous and impatient dogmatism, which scorned even to listen to doubts or to waste time on speculation, brought Swift near to the affected and formal orthodoxy of those whom I have named, yet there was another side, on which his religious feeling was far different from theirs. It had the sincerity of a mind, earnest alike in its hatreds, its loves, its sympathies, and its gloom. Only on rare occasions does he suffer it to be seen; and when, in his own life's experience, he seems to turn to it,

it is as to something which brought him no soothing or gentle influence, but rather a spirit of deepened melancholy, and a stronger sense of the mysterious sadness of that 'ridiculous tragedy,' to which he was accustomed to compare human life.

And something of this many-sidedness, and of these vivid contrasts, in personal character, appears also in the literary genius of Swift. As a literary artist, he is consummate in his skill: yet no man probably ever attended less to rules of art. His charm chiefly lies in the absolute ease with which he could create by words the very mood—humorous or grave, gay or cynical, profoundly misanthropic or playful and tender—in which he desired to place his reader. By some of the most competent of critics, his prose has been held to be the perfection of English style; not certainly because of its finish or elaboration; not because it is without inaccuracy and minor incorrectness; but because it is so absolutely clear and direct, and moves with such perfection of unstudied and inimitable ease. His works occupy a place altogether unique in our own, or any other literature. They fall into line with no one order of creative genius. But their chief literary interest lies in this, that whatever the subject of which they treat, whatever the special manner of that treatment, they all show that highest power of genius as applied to literary creation, which makes written language the absolute slave of the thought and mood that have to be conveyed, reflecting their slightest variation, and repeating, without apparent effort, the most subtle of their passing phases. To the student of literature, the gradual development of his genius, from his obscure and uncouth *Pindarics*, to the resistless flow of his *Legion Club*, and from the somewhat stilted periods of the *Dissensions at Athens and Rome*, to the unstudied simplicity of *Gulliver*, will afford, at each turn, new subject of interest, and new illustrations of the matchless power over words which Swift, in his maturity, attained.

In the following selections, therefore, the object has been not to exclude any characteristic phase of Swift's style. If we are to appreciate Swift, it is impossible to confine ourselves to those works which mark his genius at its highest, and the later ease of his style, or which deal with subjects of most enduring interest

We must see from what that ease and flexibility, which became his characteristics, gradually emerged: we must watch him in his most careless mood, and we must observe how his genius has preserved a living interest for pamphlets of which the occasion is forgotten and uncared for. In the introductory prefaces, it is hoped that enough information is given to place the student in possession of the outlines of the subject of which each work treats, and the circumstances in which it was composed. In the notes, it has been my aim to supply some of that necessary commentary which has scarcely yet been attempted in any edition of Swift. The absence of such a commentary has certainly marred the common appreciation of his genius. Men have learned a few typical phrases from his works; they have been attracted by the more obvious bursts of satire; they have singled out the passages which appeal to all time. But they have failed to follow the course of the satire line by line; to trace its movement and advance; and to identify the special reference, to some now-forgotten incident, which gives to it appropriateness and force. So far as the specimens here given are concerned, I have sought to make their more careful reading possible to the student who may not have time or opportunity to trace such allusions for himself.

H. C.

# CHRONOLOGY OF SWIFT'S LIFE.

- 
- 1667 (*Nov. 30th*). Birth of Swift.
  - 1668. Swift carried to Whitehaven by his nurse.
  - 1671. Swift brought back to Ireland.
  - 1673. Sent to Kilkenny School.
  - 1681. Sent to Trinity College, Dublin.
  - 1685 Graduates.
  - 1688. Death of Swift's uncle, Godwin Swift.
  - „ Swift joins his mother at Leicester.
  - 1689. Begins his first service with Sir William Temple.
  - 1690. Returns to Ireland.
  - 1691. Begins his second service with Temple.
  - 1692. Admitted M.A. at Oxford.
  - „ Earliest poems (*Pindaric Odes, &c.*).
  - 1694 (*May*). Quits Sir William Temple's service for the second time.
  - „ (*October*). Ordained Deacon by the Bishop of Kildare.
  - 169 $\frac{1}{2}$  (*January*). Ordained Priest, and appointed to the Prebend of Kilroot.
  - 1696 (*May*). Begins his third residence with Temple, at Moor Park.
  - 1697 (*December*). Resigns the living of Kilroot.
  - „ *Battle of the Books* chiefly written.
  - 169 $\frac{3}{8}$  (*January 27th*). Death of Temple.
  - 1699. Swift returns to Ireland, as Chaplain to Lord Berkeley.
  - 1700 (*February*). Vicar of Laracor.
  - 1699. Became D.D. of Trinity College.
  - 1701. Returns to England.
  - „ *Dissensions at Athens and Rome*.
  - 1701. Stella settles in Ireland, where Swift follows at end of the year.
  - 1702 (*March*). Death of William III.
  - „ (*April to October*). Swift visits England.
  - 1703 (*November*). Again in England.
  - 1704. Publication of the *Tale of a Tub* and *Battle of the Books*.
  - „ Returns to Laracor.
  - „ (*August*). Victory of Blenheim.
  - 1705 (*April*). Visit to England, to press claim of First Fruits for Irish Church.
  - 1706 (*May*). Victory of Ramillies.
  - 1707 (*November*). Swift again returns to England, to renew struggle for First Fruits.
  - 170 $\frac{1}{2}$  (*February*). Dismissal of Harley from Whig Ministry.
  - 1708. Victory of Oudenarde.
  - „ (*October*). Death of Prince George.
  - „ Lord Wharton appointed Governor of Ireland (Addison made Chief Secretary).
  - „ *Letter on the Sacramental Test, Argument against Abolishing Christianity, Project for the Advancement of Religion, Sentiments of a Church of England Man*.
  - „ Predictions for the year 1708 (*Bickerstaff*).
  - „ Acquaintance with Hester Vanhomrigh (*Vanessa*).
  - 1709 (*July*). Swift returns to Laracor.
  - „ Overtures for Peace from Louis XIV.
  - „ (*Nov. 5th*). Sacheverell's sermon against the Whig Ministry.



- 171<sup>9</sup> (February). Prosecution of Sacheverell.
- 1710 (May). Death of Swift's mother.
- „ (August). Harley made Chancellor of the Exchequer.
- „ (September). Swift returns to England.
- „ (October). His introduction to Harley, and breach with the Whigs.
1711. *Sid Hamet's Rod* (lampoon on Godolphin).
- „ Writing in *Examiner*.
- „ (March). Harley wounded by Guiscard.
- „ (May). Harley made Lord Treasurer, and created Earl of Oxford.
- „ (October). *Conduct of the Allies*.
- „ (December). Dismissal of Marlborough.
- 1711<sup>1</sup> (January). Visit of Prince Eugene to England.
- „ *Letter to the October Club*.
- 1712 (July). St. John created Viscount Bolingbroke.
- „ (August). Suspension of hostilities and beginning of peace negotiations.
- „ (November). Death of Duke of Hamilton in duel with Lord Mohun.
- 1713 (April). Peace signed at Utrecht.
- „ „ Appointed Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin.
- „ (June). Returns to Ireland.
- „ (July). Dissensions between Oxford and Bolingbroke.
- „ (September). Swift returns to England.
- „ (December). *Importance of the Guardian* (Attack on Steele).
1714. Plan of *Scriblerus Club*.
- „ (May). Swift quits London.
- „ (July). Oxford dismissed.
- „ (August). Death of Queen Anne. Fall of Tory Ministry.
- 1714-1719. Swift in retirement. *Cadenus and Vanessa*.
1716. Marriage with Stella.
1720. Swift's appearance as Irish Patriot. *The Universal use of Irish Manufactures*.
1722. Patent for copper coinage granted to Wood.
1723. First *Drapier's Letter*.
- „ Death of Vanessa.
1724. Lord Carteret appointed Governor of Ireland.
- „ (August). Second and Third *Drapier's Letters*.
- „ (October). Fourth *Drapier's Letter*.
- „ „ Prosecution of Harding, the printer.
- „ (November). Bill against Harding thrown out by Grand Jury.
- „ (December). Fifth *Drapier's Letter*.
- „ „ Dr. Boulter appointed Primate of Ireland.
1726. Swift visits England.
- „ Meeting with Walpole.
- „ *Gulliver's Travels*.
- 1727 (April). Swift's last visit to England.
- „ (June). Death of George I.
- 1727<sup>1</sup> (January). Death of Stella.
- „ Publication of the *Beggar's Opera*.
- „ Publication of the *Dunciad*.
- „ Death of Congreve.
1729. *A Modest Proposal*, &c.
- „ *Answer to the Craftsman*.
1731. *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*.
1733. *Rhapsody on Poetry*.
1735. Faulkner's Edition of *Swift's Works*.
- „ Death of Arbuthnot.
- „ Publication of *Four Last Years of the Queen*.
1736. *The Legion Club*.
1740. Swift's last letter.
1741. Guardian appointed for Swift by Court of Chancery.
1742. Last brain seizure, leaving Swift in helpless idiocy.
1745. (October 19<sup>th</sup>). Death.

## III.

A FULL AND TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE  
FOUGHT LAST FRIDAY BETWEEN THE  
ANCIENT AND THE MODERN BOOKS  
IN ST. JAMES'S LIBRARY.

LONDON, 1704.

THIS, perhaps the earliest of Swift's satirical works, was written in great part, if not entirely, about 1697, and it may then have been passed from hand to hand amongst the circle of Moor Park; but it was not published until 1704, when it appeared in the same volume with the *Tale of a Tub*. It would be waste of labour to attempt to assign the *Tale of a Tub* to any special phase of contemporary controversy; but the *Battle of the Books* forms an episode in a very definite literary conflict of the day, and the circumstances which led Swift to interfere in that conflict may be distinctly traced.

Amongst other results of the triumphant complacency of the France of Louis XIV, was a claim advanced on her behalf that the achievements of that country and that age transcended all that humanity had yet imagined. The praise that had hitherto been given to the great names of antiquity was, according to this theory, only the effect of the glamour that surrounded them, and had no solid foundation. The first to advance this paradox was Fontenelle: and it was repeated in Perrault's *Siècle de Louis le Grand*, a poem read before the Academy in 1687. But even in France, and even amongst those whom its supporters had attempted to please by their flattery, the theory met with little acceptance. Boileau laughed the claim to scorn: and the taste of France in the age of the Grand Monarch was

sufficiently superior to her vanity, to render her intolerant of such criticism.

The topic had already been discussed for some time in France when Swift's patron, Sir William Temple, introduced it to England in a treatise upholding the superiority of Ancient to Modern Learning. The Essay was not a critical one, nor did it aim at a careful treatment of the subject. It was rather a collection, half-playful and half-serious, of reflections on literary genius, couched in a graceful literary style. The illustrations, drawn indiscriminately from classical legend and literature, are not put forward as having any real historical basis : and Macaulay's ridicule of their flimsiness is therefore misplaced. A reply to this treatise was written by William Wotton, a youthful prodigy of scholarship belonging to Catherine Hall at Cambridge, whose classical references are as much more accurate than Temple's, as in humour and style he is inferior. One opinion which Temple had hazarded, in favour of the genuineness of the so-called Epistles of Phalaris, formed a subject of easy attack : and on the other hand, the brilliant, but superficial, scholars of Christ Church, Oxford, took up the cudgels on his behalf, and published, under the name of Charles Boyle, afterwards Earl of Orrery, a new edition of the Epistles. Boyle did not, indeed, as Macaulay wrongly represents, maintain the genuineness of the Epistles. He expressly refrains from doing so, and indeed points out the arguments that tell the other way. But he came into collision with another opponent of the Christ Church clique, of stronger calibre than Wotton. For the purposes of his edition he had borrowed from the Royal Library at St. James's a manuscript of the spurious Letters : and the sudden withdrawal of the manuscript, before its collation was complete, by Dr. Bentley, the librarian, led Boyle to comment in his preface on Bentley's churlish act, as one in keeping with his usual manners—*pro solitâ humanitate suâ*. Stung by the attack, Bentley added an appendix to a new edition of Wotton's *Reflections*, in which he ridiculed the flimsy scholarship of the Oxford faction, and proved by overwhelming arguments the absolute spuriousness of the Letters. Bentley showed that the opposite contention was so obviously absurd, and so entirely inconsistent with the known facts of antiquity, that even a passing doubt on the subject convicted any man of ignorance. If the Epistles were true, Phalaris had borrowed money from men who lived 300 years after his death, had destroyed towns that were not founded, and conquered nations that had no names ; had falsified the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides, and had written in a dialect which he could not possibly have understood.

At this stage in the dispute, Swift stepped into the arena to assist in his patron's defence, and contributed the sole work connected with the controversy which has obtained immortality. Argument and scholarship were not required, and in them Swift would have been no match for Bentley. It is curious, indeed, that Swift's allegory assumes, what Boyle had not affirmed, the genuineness of the Letters. But he had a weapon of sarcastic humour which Bentley was powerless to wield, and before which Bentley's erudition grew pale. Swift, it need not be said, espoused the cause of the Ancients, and he did so, not only because his patron had appeared for that side, but also because the whole tendency of his own taste lay in that direction. Wotton attempted to reply. He accused Swift of plagiarism, and claimed to have been informed that the *Battle of the Books* was taken from 'a French book, entitled *Combat des Livres*.' Johnson repeated the same charge; Scott even adduced Courtray as the author of this hypothetical *Combat*; and Mr. Forster, claiming to have a copy of the book, which was unique, accepts the author's name from Scott. As a fact the book appears in the British Museum: it is without an author's name; but it was written by François de Callières, a well-known Academician and diplomatist: and its contents amply prove that, though the book might, and probably did, pass through Swift's hands, and perhaps suggested certain incidents in his own narrative, it yet possesses no claim whatever to have been the basis of the main structure of his satire. Swift's part in the controversy may have been at first determined by the attitude of his patron; but it was also consistent with the whole bent of his taste and opinions. *The Battle of the Books* marks the period when his genius began to find its fitting employment, and when, discarding 'Pindarics,' he turned to satire, and learned the power which belonged to him by right of that faculty of sarcastic humour in which he stands unsurpassed.

### *The Bookseller to the Reader.*

The following Discourse, as it is unquestionably of the same author, so it seems to have been written about the same time with the former; I mean the year 1697, when the famous dispute was on foot about ancient and modern learning. The controversy took its rise from an essay of Sir William Temple's upon that subject, which was

answered by W. Wotton, B.D., with an Appendix by Dr. Bentley, endeavouring to destroy the credit of *Æsop* and *Phalaris* for authors, whom Sir William Temple had, in the essay before mentioned, highly commended. In that appendix, the doctor falls hard upon a new edition of *Phalaris*, put out by the Honourable Charles Boyle, now Earl of Orrery, to which Mr. Boyle replied at large, with great learning and wit; and the doctor voluminously rejoined. In this dispute, the town highly resented to see a person of Sir William Temple's character and merits roughly used by the two reverend gentlemen aforesaid, and without any manner of provocation. At length, there appearing no end of the quarrel, our author tells us, that the books in St. James's Library, looking upon themselves as parties principally concerned, took up the controversy, and came to a decisive battle; but the manuscript, by the injury of fortune or weather, being in several places imperfect, we cannot learn to which side the victory fell.

I must warn the reader to beware of applying to persons what is here meant only of books, in the most literal sense. So, when Virgil is mentioned, we are not to understand the person of a famous poet called by that name; but only certain sheets of paper, bound up in leather, containing in print the works of the said poet: and so of the rest.

### *The Preface of the Author.*

Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it. But, if it should happen otherwise, the danger is not great; and I have learned, from long experience, never to apprehend mischief from those understandings I have been able to provoke: for

anger and fury, though they add strength to the sinews of the body, yet are found to relax those of the mind, and to render all its efforts feeble and impotent.

There is a brain that will endure but one scumming ; let the owner gather it with discretion, and manage his little stock with husbandry ; but, of all things, let him beware of bringing it under the lash of his betters, because that will make it all bubble up into impertinence, and he will find no new supply. Wit, without knowledge, being a sort of cream, which gathers in a night to the top, and, by a skilful hand, may be soon whipped into froth ; but, once skimmed away, what appears underneath will be fit for nothing but to be thrown to the hogs.

## A FULL AND TRUE ACCOUNT, &c.

Whoever examines, with due <sup>caution</sup> circumspection, into the 15 *Annual Records of Time*, will find it remarked, that war is the child of pride, and pride the daughter of riches :—the former of which assertions may be soon granted, but one cannot so easily subscribe to the latter ; for pride is nearly related to beggary and want, either by father or mother, and 20 sometimes by both : and to speak naturally, it very seldom happens among men to fall out when all have enough ; invasions usually travelling from north to south, that is to say, from poverty upon plenty. The most ancient and natural grounds of quarrels, are lust and avarice ; which, though we 25 may allow to be brethren, or collateral branches of pride, are certainly the issues of want. For, to speak in the phrase of writers upon the politics, we may observe in the republic of dogs, which, in its original, seems to be an institution of the many, that the whole state is ever in the profoundest 30

peace after a full meal; and that civil broils arise among them when it happens for one great bone to be seized on by some leading dog, who either divides it among the few, and then it falls to an oligarchy, or keeps it to himself, 5 and then it runs up to a tyranny. The same reasoning also holds place among them in those dissensions we behold in regard to any of their females. For the right of possession lying in common, (it being impossible to establish a property in so delicate a case,) jealousies and suspicions do 10 so abound, that the whole commonwealth of that street is reduced to a manifest state of war, of every citizen against every citizen, till some one, of more courage, conduct, or fortune than the rest, seizes and enjoys the prize; upon which naturally arises plenty of heart-burning, and envy, 15 and snarling against the happy dog. Again, if we look upon any of these republics engaged in a foreign war, either of invasion or defence, we shall find the same reasoning will serve as to the grounds and occasions of each; and that poverty or want, in some degree or other, (whether 20 real or in opinion, which makes no alteration in the case,) hath a great share, as well as pride, on the part of the aggressor.

Now, whoever will please to take this scheme, and either reduce or adapt it to an intellectual state, or commonwealth 25 of learning, will soon discover the first ground of disagreement between the two great parties at this time in arms, and may form just conclusions upon the merits of either cause. But the issue or events of this war are not so easy to conjecture at; for the present quarrel is so inflamed 30 by the warm heads of either faction, and the pretensions somewhere or other so exorbitant, as not to admit the least overtures of accommodation. This quarrel first began, as I have heard it affirmed by an old dweller in the neighbourhood, about a small spot of ground, lying and being upon

one of the two tops of the hill Parnassus; the highest and largest of which had, it seems, been time out of mind in quiet possession of certain tenants, called the Ancients; and the other was held by the Moderns. But these, disliking their present station, sent certain ambassadors to the 5 ancients, complaining of a great nuisance; how the height of that part of Parnassus quite spoiled the prospect of theirs, especially towards the east; and therefore, to avoid a war, offered them the choice of this alternative, either that the ancients would please to remove themselves and their effects 10 down to the lower summity, which the moderns would graciously surrender to them, and advance in their place; or else the said ancients will give leave to the moderns to come with shovels and mattocks, and level the said hill as low as they shall think it convenient. To which the ancients made 15 answer, how little they expected such a message as this from a colony, whom they had admitted, out of their own free grace, to so near a neighbourhood. That, as to their own seat, they were aborigines of it, and therefore, to talk with them of a removal or surrender, was a language they 20 did not understand. That, if the height of the hill on their side shortened the prospect of the moderns, it was a disadvantage they could not help; but desired them to consider, whether that injury (if it be any) were not largely recompensed by the shade and shelter it afforded them. 25 That as to the levelling or digging down, it was either folly or ignorance to propose it, if they did, or did not, know, how that side of the hill was an entire rock, which would break their tools and hearts, without any damage to itself. That they would therefore advise the moderns 30 rather to raise their own side of the hill, than dream of pulling down that of the ancients: to the former of which they would not only give licence, but also largely contribute. All this was rejected by the moderns with much indignation,



who still insisted upon one of the two expedients; and so this difference broke out into a long and obstinate war, maintained on the one part by resolution, and by the courage of certain leaders and allies; but, on the other, by  
5 the greatness of their number, upon all defeats affording continual recruits. In this quarrel whole rivulets of ink have been exhausted, and the virulence of both parties enormously augmented. Now, it must here be understood, that ink is the great missive weapon in all battles of the learned,  
10 which, conveyed through a sort of engine called a quill, infinite numbers of these are darted at the enemy, by the valiant on each side, with equal skill and violence, as if it were an engagement of *porcupines*. This malignant liquor was compounded, by the engineer who invented it, of two  
15 ingredients, which are, gall and copperas; by its bitterness and venom to suit, in some degree, as well as to foment, the genius of the combatants. And as the *Grecians*, after an engagement, when they could not agree about the  
- victory, were wont to set up trophies on both sides, the  
20 beaten party being content to be at the same expense, to keep itself in countenance; (a laudable and ancient custom, happily revived of late, in the art of war;) so the learned, after a sharp and bloody dispute, do, on both sides, hang out their trophies too, whichever comes by the worst.  
25 These trophies have largely inscribed on them the merits of the cause; a full impartial account of such a battle, and how the victory fell clearly to the party that set them up. They are known to the world under several names: as, disputes, arguments, rejoinders, brief considerations, answers,  
30 replies, remarks, reflections, objections, confutations. For a very few days they are fixed up in all public places, either by themselves or their representatives<sup>1</sup>, for passengers to

<sup>1</sup> Their title-pages.

gaze at; whence the chiefest and largest are removed to certain magazines they call libraries, there to remain in a quarter purposely assigned them, and from thenceforth begin to be called books of controversy.

In these books is wonderfully instilled and preserved the spirit of each warrior, while he is alive; and after his death, his soul transmigrates there to inform them. This at least is the more common opinion; but I believe it is with libraries as with other cemeteries; where some philosophers affirm, that a certain spirit, which they call *brutum hominis*, hovers over the monument, till the body is corrupted, and turns to dust, or to worms, but then vanishes or dissolves; so, we may say, a restless spirit haunts over every book, till dust or worms have seized upon it; which to some may happen in a few days, but to others later: and therefore books of controversy being, of all others, haunted by the most disorderly spirits, have always been confined in a separate lodge from the rest; and, for fear of mutual violence against each other, it was thought prudent by our ancestors to bind them to the peace with strong iron chains. Of which invention the original occasion was this: When the works of Scotus first came out, they were carried to a certain library, and had lodgings appointed them; but this author was no sooner settled than he went to visit his master Aristotle; and there both concerted together to seize Plato by main force, and turn him out from his ancient station among the divines, where he had peaceably dwelt near eight hundred years. The attempt succeeded, and the two usurpers have reigned ever since in his stead: but, to maintain quiet for the future, it was decreed, that all *polemics* of the larger size should be held fast with a chain.

By this expedient, the public peace of libraries might certainly have been preserved, if a new species of controversial books had not arose of late years, instinct with

a most malignant spirit, from the war above mentioned between the learned, about the higher summity of *Parnassus*.

When these books were first admitted into the public  
5 libraries, I remember to have said, upon occasion, to several  
persons concerned, how I was sure they would create broils  
wherever they came, unless a world of care were taken:  
and therefore I advised, that the champions of each side  
should be coupled together, or otherwise mixed, that, like the  
10 blending of contrary poisons, their malignity might be  
employed among themselves. And it seems I was neither  
an ill prophet, nor an ill counsellor; for it was nothing else  
but the neglect of this caution which gave occasion to the  
terrible fight that happened on Friday last, between the  
15 ancient and modern books, in the king's library. Now,  
because the talk of this battle is so fresh in everybody's  
mouth, and the expectation of the town so great to be in-  
formed in the particulars, I, being possessed of all qualifica-  
tions requisite in an historian, and retained by neither  
20 party, have resolved to comply with the urgent importunity  
of my friends, by writing down a full impartial account  
thereof.

The guardian of the regal library, a person of great valour,  
but chiefly renowned for his humanity, had been a fierce  
25 champion for the moderns; and, in an engagement upon  
Parnassus, had vowed, with his own hands, to knock down  
two of the ancient chiefs, who guarded a small pass on the  
superior rock; but, endeavouring to climb up, was cruelly  
obstructed by his own unhappy weight, and tendency to-  
30 wards his centre; a quality to which those of the modern  
party are extreme subject; for, being light-headed, they have,  
in speculation, a wonderful agility, and conceive nothing  
too high for them to mount; but, in reducing to practice,  
discover a mighty pressure about their backs and their

heels. Having thus failed in his design, the disappointed champion bore a cruel rancour to the ancients; which he resolved to gratify, by shewing all marks of his favour to the books of their adversaries, and lodging them in the fairest apartments; when, at the same time, whatever book had the boldness to own itself for an advocate of the ancients, was buried alive in some obscure corner, and threatened, upon the least displeasure, to be turned out of doors. Besides, it so happened, that about this time there was a strange confusion of place among all the books in the library; for which several reasons were assigned. Some imputed it to a great heap of learned dust, which a perverse wind blew off from a shelf of moderns, into the keeper's eyes. Others affirmed, he had a humour to pick the worms out of the schoolmen, and swallow them fresh and fasting; whereof some fell upon his spleen, and some climbed up into his head, to the great perturbation of both. And lastly, others maintained, that, by walking much in the dark about the library, he had quite lost the situation of it out of his head; and therefore, in replacing his books, he was apt to mistake, and clap Des Cartes next to Aristotle; poor Plato had got between Hobbes and the Seven Wise Masters, and Virgil was hemmed in with Dryden on one side, and Withers on the other.

Meanwhile those books that were advocates for the moderns, chose out one from among them to make a progress through the whole library, examine the number and strength of their party, and concert their affairs. This messenger performed all things very industriously, and brought back with him a list of their forces, in all fifty thousand, consisting chiefly of light-horse, heavy-armed foot, and mercenaries: whereof the foot were in general but sorrily armed, and worse clad: their horses large, but extremely out of case and heart; however, some few, by

trading among the ancients, had furnished themselves tolerably enough.

While things were in this ferment, discord grew extremely high; hot words passed on both sides, and ill blood was  
5 plentifully bred. Here a solitary ancient, squeezed up among a whole shelf of moderns, offered fairly to dispute the case, and to prove by manifest reasons, that the priority was due to them, from long possession; and in regard of their prudence, antiquity, and, above all, their great merits  
10 toward the moderns. But these denied the premises, and seemed very much to wonder, how the ancients could pretend to insist upon their antiquity, when it was so plain, (if they went to that,) that the moderns were much the more ancient<sup>1</sup> of the two. (As for any obligations they  
15 owed to the ancients, they renounced them all. 'Tis true, said they, we are informed, some few of our party have been so mean to borrow their subsistence from you; but the rest, infinitely the greater number, (and especially we French and English,) were so far from stooping to so base  
20 an example, that there never passed, till this very hour, six words between us.) For our horses are of our own breeding, our arms of our own forging, and our clothes of our own cutting out and sewing.) Plato was by chance up on the next shelf, and observing those that spoke to be in  
25 the ragged plight mentioned a while ago; their jades lean and foundered, their weapons of rotten wood, their armour rusty, and nothing but rags underneath; he laughed loud, and in his pleasant way swore, by — he believed them.

30 Now, the moderns had not proceeded in their late negotiation with secrecy enough to escape the notice of the enemy. For those advocates, who had begun the quarrel, by setting first on foot the dispute of precedency, talked so loud of

<sup>1</sup> According to the modern paradox.

coming to a battle, that Temple happened to overhear them, and gave immediate intelligence to the ancients; who, there-upon, drew up their scattered troops together, resolving to act upon the defensive; upon which, several of the moderns fled over to their party, and among the rest Temple himself. 5 This Temple, having been educated and long conversed among the ancients, was, of all the moderns, their greatest favourite, and became their greatest champion.

Things were at this crisis, when a material accident fell out. For, upon the highest corner of a large window, there 10 dwelt a certain spider, swollen up to the first magnitude by the destruction of infinite numbers of flies, whose spoils lay scattered before the gates of his palace, like human bones before the cave of some giant. The avenues to his castle were guarded with turnpikes and palisadoes, all after the 15 modern way of fortification. After you had passed several courts, you came to the centre, wherein you might behold the constable himself in his own lodgings, which had windows fronting to each avenue, and ports to sally out, upon all occasions of prey or defence. In this mansion he 20 had for some time dwelt in peace and plenty, without danger to his person, by swallows from above, or to his palace, by brooms from below: when it was the pleasure of fortune to conduct thither a wandering bee, to whose curiosity a broken pane in the glass had discovered itself, 25 and in he went; where, expatiating a while, he at last happened to alight upon one of the outward walls of the spider's citadel; which, yielding to the unequal weight, sunk down to the very foundation. Thrice he endeavoured to force his passage, and thrice the centre shook. The 30 spider within, feeling the terrible convulsion, supposed at first that nature was approaching to her final dissolution; or else, that Beelzebub, with all his legions, was come to revenge the death of many thousands of his subjects, whom

this enemy had slain and devoured. However, he at length valiantly resolved to issue forth, and meet his fate. Meanwhile the bee had acquitted himself of his toils, and, posted securely at some distance, was employed in cleansing his wings, and disengaging them from the ragged remnants of the cobweb. By this time the spider was adventured out, when, beholding the chasms, the ruins, and dilapidations of his fortress, he was very near at his wit's end; he stormed and swore like a madman, and swelled till he was ready to burst. At length, casting his eye upon the bee, and wisely gathering causes from events, (for they knew each other by sight), A plague split you, said he; is it you, with a vengeance, that have made this litter here? could not you look before you, and be d—d? do you think I have nothing else to do (in the devil's name) but to mend and repair after you?—Good words, friend, said the bee, (having now pruned himself, and being disposed to droll), I'll give you my hand and word to come near your kennel no more; I was never in such a confounded pickle since I was born.—Sirrah, replied the spider, if it were not for breaking an old custom in our family, never to stir abroad against an enemy, I should come and teach you better manners.—I pray have patience, said the bee, or you will spend your substance, and, for aught I see, you may stand in need of it all towards the repair of your house.—Rogue, rogue, replied the spider, yet, methinks you should have more respect to a person, whom all the world allows to be so much your betters.—By my troth, said the bee, the comparison will amount to a very good jest; and you will do me a favour to let me know the reasons that all the world is pleased to use in so hopeful a dispute. At this the spider, having swelled himself into the size and posture of a disputant, began his argument in the true spirit of controversy, with a resolution to be heartily scurrilous and angry, to urge on his own

reasons, without the least regard to the answers or objections of his opposite ; and fully predetermined in his mind against all conviction.

Not to disparage myself, said he, by the comparison with such a rascal, what art thou but a vagabond without house 5 or home, without stock or inheritance, born to no possession of your own, but a pair of wings and a drone-pipe ? Your livelihood is an universal plunder upon nature ; a freebooter over fields and gardens ; and, for the sake of stealing, will rob a nettle as readily as a violet. Whereas I am a domestic 10 animal, furnished with a native stock within myself. This large castle (to shew my improvements in the mathematics) is all built with my own hands, and the materials extracted altogether out of mine own person.

I am glad, answered the bee, to hear you grant at least 15 that I am come honestly by my wings and my voice ; for then, it seems, I am obliged to Heaven alone for my flights and my music ; and Providence would never have bestowed on me two such gifts, without designing them for the noblest ends. I visit indeed all the flowers and blossoms of the field 20 and the garden ; but whatever I collect from thence, enriches myself, without the least injury to their beauty, their smell, or their taste. Now, for you and your skill in architecture, and other mathematics, I have little to say : in that building of yours there might, for aught I know, have been labour 25 and method enough ; but, by woful experience for us both, 'tis too plain, the materials are naught ; and I hope you will henceforth take warning, and consider duration and matter, as well as method and art. You boast, indeed, of being obliged to no other creature, but of drawing and spinning 30 out all from yourself ; that is to say, if we may judge of the liquor in the vessel, by what issues out, you possess a good plentiful store of dirt and poison in your breast ; and, though I would by no means lessen or disparage your genuine stock



of either, yet, I doubt you are somewhat obliged, for an increase of both, to a little foreign assistance. Your inherent portion of dirt does not fail of acquisitions, by sweepings exhaled from below; and one insect furnishes you with  
5 a share of poison to destroy another. So that, in short, the question comes all to this; whether is the nobler being of the two, that which, by a lazy contemplation of four inches round, by an overweening pride, which, feeding and engendering on itself, turns all into venom, producing nothing at  
10 all, but flybane and a cobweb; or that which, by an universal range, with long search, much study, true judgment, and distinction of things, brings home honey and wax?

This dispute was managed with such eagerness, clamour, and warmth, that the two parties of books, in arms below,  
15 stood silent a while, waiting in suspense what would be the issue; which was not long undetermined: for the bee, grown impatient at so much loss of time, fled straight away to a bed of roses, without looking for a reply; and left the spider, like an orator, collected in himself, and just prepared  
20 to burst out.

It happened upon this emergency, that Æsop broke silence first. He had been of late most barbarously treated by a strange effect of the regent's humanity, who had tore off his title-page, sorely defaced one half of his  
25 leaves, and chained him fast among a shelf of moderns. Where, soon discovering how high the quarrel was likely to proceed, he tried all his arts, and turned himself to a thousand forms. At length, in the borrowed shape of an ass, the regent mistook him for a modern; by which means he  
30 had time and opportunity to escape to the ancients, just when the spider and the bee were entering into their contest; to which he gave his attention with a world of pleasure; and when it was ended, swore in the loudest key, that in all his life he had never known two cases so parallel

and adapt to each other, as that in the window, and this upon the shelves. The disputants, said he, have admirably managed the dispute between them, have taken in the full strength of all that is to be said on both sides, and exhausted the substance of every argument *pro* and *con*. It is but to 5 adjust the reasonings of both to the present quarrel, then to compare and apply the labours and fruits of each, as the bee hath learnedly deduced them, and we shall find the conclusion fall plain and close upon the moderns and us. For, pray, gentlemen, was ever anything so modern as the 10 spider in his air, his turns, and his paradoxes? He argues in the behalf of you his brethren, and himself, with many boastings of his native stock and great genius; that he spins and spits wholly from himself, and scorns to own any obligation or assistance from without. Then he displays to 15 you his great skill in architecture, and improvement in the mathematics. To all this the bee, as an advocate, retained by us the ancients, thinks fit to answer; that, if one may judge of the great genius or inventions of the moderns by what they have produced, you will hardly have coun- 20 tenance to bear you out, in boasting of either. Erect your schemes with as much method and skill as you please; yet if the materials be nothing but dirt, spun out of your own entrails (the guts of modern brains) the edifice will conclude at last in a cobweb; the duration of which, like that of other 25 spiders' webs, may be imputed to their being forgotten, or neglected, or hid in a corner. For anything else of genuine that the moderns may pretend to, I cannot recollect; unless it be a large vein of wrangling and satire, much of a nature and substance with the spider's poison; which, however 30 they pretend to spit wholly out of themselves, is improved by the same arts, by feeding upon the insects and vermin of the age. As for us the ancients, we are content, with the bee, to pretend to nothing of our own, beyond our wings

and our voice : that is to say, our flights and our language. For the rest, whatever we have got, hath been by infinite labour and search, and ranging through every corner of nature ; the difference is, that, instead of dirt and poison, we have rather chose to fill our hives with honey and wax ; thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light.)

It is wonderful to conceive the tumult arisen among the books, upon the close of this long descant of Æsop : both parties took the hint, and heightened their animosities so on a sudden, that they resolved it should come to a battle. Immediately the two main bodies withdrew, under their several ensigns, to the farthest parts of the library, and there entered into cabals and consults upon the present emergency. The moderns were in very warm debates upon the choice of their leaders ; and nothing less than the fear impending from their enemies, could have kept them from mutinies upon this occasion. The difference was greatest among the horse, where every private trooper pretended to the chief command, from Tasso and Milton, to Dryden and Withers. The light-horse were commanded by Cowley and Despreaux. There came the bowmen under their valiant leaders, Des Cartes, Gassendi, and Hobbes ; whose strength was such, that they could shoot their arrows, behind the atmosphere, never to fall down again, but turn, like that of Evander, into meteors ; or, like the cannon-ball, into stars. Paracelsus brought a squadron of stink-pot-flingers from the snowy mountains of Rhætia. There came a vast body of dragons, of different nations, under the leading of Harvey, their great aga : part armed with scythes, the weapons of death ; part with lances and long knives, all steeped in poison ; part shot bullets of a most malignant nature, and used white powder, which infallibly killed without report. There came several bodies

of heavy-armed foot, all mercenaries, under the ensigns of Guicciardini, Davila, Polydore Virgil, Buchanan, Mariana, Cambden, and others. The engineers were commanded by Regiomontanus and Wilkins. The rest were a confused multitude, led by Scotus, Aquinas, and Bellarmine; of 5 mighty bulk and stature, but without either arms, courage, or discipline. In the last place, came infinite swarms of calones, a disorderly rout led by L'Estrange; rogues and ragamuffins, that follow the camp for nothing but the plunder, all without coats to cover them. 10

The army of the ancients was much fewer in number; Homer led the horse, and Pindar the light-horse; Euclid was chief engineer; Plato and Aristotle commanded the bowmen; Herodotus and Livy the foot; Hippocrates the dragoons; the allies, led by Vossius and Temple, brought up the rear.

All things violently tending to a decisive battle, Fame, who much frequented, and had a large apartment formerly assigned her in the regal library, fled up straight to Jupiter, to whom she delivered a faithful account of all that 20 passed between the two parties below; (for, among the gods, she always tells truth). Jove, in great concern, convokes a council in the milky way. The senate assembled, he declares the occasion of convening them; a bloody battle just independent between two mighty armies of ancient and modern 25 creatures, called books, wherein the celestial interest was but too deeply concerned. Momus, the patron of the moderns, made an excellent speech in their favour, which was answered by Pallas, the protectress of the ancients. The assembly was divided in their affections; when Jupiter 30 commanded the book of fate to be laid before him. Immediately were brought by Mercury three large volumes in folio, containing memoirs of all things past, present, and to come. The clasps were of silver double gilt; the covers of

celestial turkey leather ; and the paper such as here on earth might almost pass for vellum. Jupiter, having silently read the decree, would communicate the import to none, but presently shut up the book.

- 5 Without the doors of this assembly, there attended a vast number of light, nimble gods, menial servants to Jupiter : these are his ministering instruments in all affairs below. They travel in a caravan, more or less together, and are fastened to each other, like a link of galley-slaves, by a light  
10 chain, which passes from them to Jupiter's great toe : and yet, in receiving or delivering a message, they may never approach above the lowest step of his throne, where he and they whisper to each other, through a long hollow trunk. These deities are called by mortal men accidents or events ;  
15 but the gods call them second causes. Jupiter having delivered his message to a certain number of these divinities, they flew immediately down to the pinnacle of the regal library, and, consulting a few minutes, entered unseen, and disposed the parties according to their orders.
- 20 Meanwhile, Momus, fearing the worst, and calling to mind an ancient prophecy, which bore no very good face to his children the moderns, bent his flight to the region of a malignant deity, called Criticism. She dwelt on the top of a snowy mountain in Nova Zembla ; there Momus found  
25 her extended in her den, upon the spoils of numberless volumes, half devoured. (At her right hand sat Ignorance, her father and husband, blind with age ; at her left, Pride, her mother, dressing her up in the scraps of paper herself had torn.) There was Opinion, her sister, light of foot, hood-  
30 winked, and headstrong, yet giddy, and perpetually turning. About her played her children, Noise and Impudence, Dulness and Vanity, Positiveness, Pedantry, and Ill-manners. The goddess herself had claws like a cat ; her head, and ears, and voice, resembled those of an ass : her teeth fallen

out before, her eyes turned inward, as if she looked only upon herself; her diet was the overflowing of her own gall; her spleen was so large, as to stand prominent; nor did she want teats, at which a crew of ugly monsters were greedily sucking; and, what is wonderful to conceive, the 5 bulk of spleen increased faster than the sucking could diminish it. Goddess, said Momus, can you sit idly here while our devout worshippers, the moderns, are this minute entering into a cruel battle, and perhaps now lying under the swords of their enemies? who then hereafter will ever 10 sacrifice, or build altars to our divinities? Haste, therefore, to the British isle, and, if possible, prevent their destruction; while I make factions among the gods, and gain them over to our party.

Momus, having thus delivered himself, staid not for an 15 answer, but left the goddess to her own resentments. Up she rose in a rage, and, as it is the form upon such occasions, began a soliloquy: 'Tis I, (said she,) who give wisdom to infants and idiots; by me, children grow wiser than their parents; by me, beaux become politicians, and school-boys 20 judges of philosophy; by me, sophisters debate, and conclude upon the depths of knowledge; and coffee-house wits, instinct by me, can correct an author's style, and display his minutest errors, without understanding a syllable of his matter, or his language. By me, striplings spend their judgment, as they 25 do their estate, before it comes into their hands. 'Tis I who have deposed wit and knowledge from their empire over poetry, and advanced myself in their stead. And shall a few upstart ancients dare to oppose me?—But come, my aged parents, and you, my children dear, and thou, my 30 beauteous sister; let us ascend my chariot, and haste to assist our devout moderns, who are now sacrificing to us a hecatomb, as I perceive by that grateful smell, which from hence reaches my nostrils.

The goddess and her train having mounted the chariot, which was drawn by tame geese, flew over infinite regions, shedding her influence in due places, till at length she arrived at her beloved island of Britain ; but, in hovering  
5 over its metropolis, what blessings did she not let fall upon her seminaries of Gresham and Covent Garden ! And now she reached the fatal plain of St. James's library, at what time the two armies were upon the point to engage ; where, entering with all her caravan unseen, and landing upon a  
10 case of shelves, now desert, but once inhabited by a colony of *virtuosos*, she staid awhile to observe the posture of both armies.

But here the tender cares of a mother began to fill her thoughts, and move in her breast : for, at the head of a troop  
15 of modern bowmen, she cast her eyes upon her son Wotton ; to whom the fates had assigned a very short thread. Wotton, a young hero, whom an unknown father of mortal race begot by stolen embraces with this goddess. He was the darling of his mother above all her children, and she resolved to go  
20 and comfort him. But first, according to the good old custom of deities, she cast about to change her shape, for fear the divinity of her countenance might dazzle his mortal sight, and overcharge the rest of his senses. She therefore gathered up her person into an octavo compass : her body  
25 grew white and arid, and split in pieces with dryness ; the thick turned into pasteboard, and the thin into paper ; upon which her parents and children artfully strowed a black juice, or decoction of gall and soot, in form of letters : her head, and voice, and spleen, kept their primitive form : and that  
30 which before was a cover of skin, did still continue so. In which guise, she marched on towards the moderns, undistinguishable in shape and dress from the divine Bentley, Wotton's dearest friend. Brave Wotton, said the goddess, why do our troops stand idle here, to spend their present

vigour, and opportunity of the day? Away, let us haste to the generals, and advise to give the onset immediately. Having spoke thus, she took the ugliest of her monsters, full glutted from her spleen, and flung it invisibly into his mouth, which, flying straight up into his head, squeezed out his eye- 5 balls, gave him a distorted look, and half overturned his brain. Then she privately ordered two of her beloved children, Dulness and Ill-Manners, closely to attend his person in all encounters. Having thus accoutred him, she vanished in a mist, and the hero perceived it was the goddess his 10 mother.]

The destined hour of fate being now arrived, the fight began; whereof, before I dare adventure to make a particular description, I must, after the example of other authors, petition for a hundred tongues, and mouths, and hands, and 15 pens, which would all be too little to perform so immense a work. Say, goddess, that presidest over history, who it was that first advanced in the field of battle! Paracelsus, at the head of his dragoons, observing Galen in the adverse wing, darted his javelin with a mighty force, which the brave 20 ancient received upon his shield, the point breaking in the second fold.

*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
								<i>Hic pauca</i>	
								<i>desunt.</i>	25

They bore the wounded aga on their shields to his chariot

*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Desunt</i>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>nonnulla.</i>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
									30

Then Aristotle, observing Bacon advance with a furious mien, drew his bow to the head, and let fly his arrow, which missed the valiant modern, and went hizzing over his head; but Des Cartes it hit; the steel point quickly



found a defect in his head-piece ; it pierced the leather and the pasteboard, and went in at his right eye. The torture of the pain whirled the valiant bowman round, till death, like a star of superior influence, drew him into his own vortex.

*Ingens hiatus* \* \* \* \* \*  
*hic in MS.* \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* when Homer appeared at the head of the cavalry, mounted on a furious horse, with difficulty managed by the rider himself, but which no other mortal durst approach ; he rode among the enemy's ranks, and bore down all before him. Say, goddess, whom he slew first, and whom he slew last ! First, Gondibert advanced against him, clad in heavy armour, and mounted on a staid, sober gelding, not so famed for his speed as his docility in kneeling, whenever his rider would mount or alight. He had made a vow to Pallas, that he would never leave the field till he had spoiled Homer of his armour : madman, who had never once seen the wearer, nor understood his strength ! Him Homer overthrew, horse and man, to the ground, there to be trampled and choked in the dirt. Then, with a long spear, he slew Denham, a stout modern, who from his father's side derived his lineage from Apollo, but his mother was of mortal race. He fell, and bit the earth. The celestial part Apollo took, and made it a star ; but the terrestrial lay wallowing upon the ground. Then Homer slew Wesley, with a kick of his horse's heel ; he took Perrault by mighty force out of his saddle, then hurled him at Fontenelle, with the same blow dashing out both their brains.

On the left wing of the horse, Virgil appeared, in shining armour, completely fitted to his body : he was mounted on a dapple-gray steed, the slowness of whose pace was an effect of the highest mettle and vigour. He cast his eye

on the adverse wing, with a desire to find an object worthy of his valour, when, behold, upon a sorrel gelding of a monstrous size, appeared a foe, issuing from among the thickest of the enemy's squadrons; but his speed was less than his noise; for his horse, old and lean, spent the dregs of his strength in a high trot, which, though it made slow advances, yet caused a loud clashing of his armour, terrible to hear. The two cavaliers had now approached within the throw of a lance, when the stranger desired a parley, and, lifting up the vizard of his helmet, a face hardly appeared from within, which, after a pause, was known for that of the renowned Dryden. The brave ancient suddenly started, as one possessed with surprise and disappointment together; for the helmet was nine times too large for the head, which appeared situate far in the hinder part, even like the lady in a lobster, or like a mouse under a canopy of state, or like a shrivelled beau, from within the penthouse of a modern periwig; and the voice was suited to the visage, sounding weak and remote. Dryden, in a long harangue, soothed up the good ancient; called him father, and, by a large deduction of genealogies, made it plainly appear that they were nearly related. Then he humbly proposed an exchange of armour, as a lasting mark of hospitality between them. Virgil consented, (for the goddess Diffidence came unseen, and cast a mist before his eyes,) though his was of gold, and cost a hundred beeves, the other's but of rusty iron. However, this glittering armour became the modern yet worse than his own. Then they agreed to exchange horses; but, when it came to the trial, Dryden was afraid, and utterly unable to mount.

*	*	*	*	*	*	*	30
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
*	*	*	*	*	<i>Alter hiatus</i>		
*	*	*	*	*	<i>in MS.</i>		
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	

Lucan appeared upon a fiery horse of admirable shape, but headstrong, bearing the rider where he list over the field; he made a mighty slaughter among the enemy's horse; which destruction to stop, Blackmore, a famous  
 5 modern, (but one of the mercenaries,) strenuously opposed himself, and darted a javelin with a strong hand, which, falling short of its mark, struck deep in the earth. Then Lucan threw a lance; but Æsculapius came unseen, and turned off the point. Brave modern, said Lucan, I per-  
 10 ceive some god protects you, for never did my arm so deceive me before; but what mortal can contend with a god? Therefore, let us fight no longer, but present gifts to each other. Lucan then bestowed the modern a pair of spurs, and Blackmore gave Lucan a bridle. \* \*

15 \* \* \* \* \*  
*Pauca de-* \* \* \* \* \*  
*sunt.* \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Creech: but the goddess Dulness took a cloud, formed  
 20 into the shape of Horace, armed and mounted, and placed it in a flying posture before him. Glad was the cavalier to begin a combat with a flying foe, and pursued the image, threatening loud; till at last it led him to the peaceful bower of his father, Ogleby, by whom he was disarmed, and  
 25 assigned to his repose.

Then Pindar slew —, and —, and Oldham, and —, and  
 30 Afra the Amazon, light of foot; never advancing in a direct line, but wheeling with incredible agility and force, he made a terrible slaughter among the enemy's light horse. Him when Cowley observed, his generous heart burnt within him, and he advanced against the fierce ancient, imitating his address, and pace, and career, as well as the vigour of his horse and his own skill would allow. When the two cavaliers had approached within the length of three javelins.

first Cowley threw a lance, which missed Pindar, and, passing into the enemy's ranks, fell ineffectual to the ground. Then Pindar darted a javelin so large and weighty, that scarce a dozen cavaliers, as cavaliers are in our degenerate days, could raise it from the ground; yet he threw 5 it with ease, and it went, by an unerring hand, singing through the air; nor could the modern have avoided present death, if he had not luckily opposed the shield, that had been given him by Venus. And now both heroes drew their swords; but the modern was so aghast and 10 disordered, that he knew not where he was; his shield dropped from his hands; thrice he fled, and thrice he could not escape; at last he turned, and lifting up his hands in the posture of a suppliant, Godlike Pindar, said he, spare my life, and possess my horse, with these arms, besides the 15 ransom which my friends will give, when they hear I am alive, and your prisoner. Dog! said Pindar, let your ransom stay with your friends; but your carcass shall be left for the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. With that he raised his sword, and, with a mighty stroke, 20 cleft the wretched modern in twain, the sword pursuing the blow; and one half lay panting on the ground, to be trod in pieces by the horses' feet; the other half was borne by the frightened steed through the field. This Venus took, washed it seven times in ambrosia, then struck it thrice 25 with a sprig of amarant; upon which the leather grew round and soft, and the leaves turned into feathers, and being gilded before, continued gilded still; so it became a dove, and she harnessed it to her chariot. \* \*

*	*	*	*	*	<i>Hiatus valde de-</i>	30
*	*	*	*	*	<i>flendus in MS.</i>	
*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Day being far spent, and the numerous forces of the moderns half inclining to a retreat, there issued forth from a squadron of their heavy-armed foot, a captain, whose name was Bentley, in person the most deformed of all the moderns; 5 tall, but without shape or comeliness; large, but without strength or proportion. His armour was patched up of a thousand incoherent pieces; and the sound of it, as he marched, was loud and dry, like that made by the fall of a sheet of lead, which an Etesian wind blows suddenly down from the roof 10 of some steeple. His helmet was of old rusty iron, but the vizard was brass, which, tainted by his breath, corrupted into copperas, nor wanted gall from the same fountain; so that, whenever provoked by anger or labour, an atramentous quality, of most malignant nature, was seen to distil from 15 his lips. In his right hand he grasped a flail, and (that he might never be unprovided of an offensive weapon) a vessel full of ordure in his left. Thus completely armed, he advanced with a slow and heavy pace where the modern chiefs were holding a consult upon the sum of things; who, as he 20 came onwards, laughed to behold his crooked leg and hump shoulder, which his boot and armour, vainly endeavouring to hide, were forced to comply with and expose. The generals made use of him for his talent of railing; which, kept within government, proved frequently of great service 25 to their cause, but, at other times, did more mischief than good; for, at the least touch of offence, and often without any at all, he would, like a wounded elephant, convert it against his leaders. Such, at this juncture, was the disposition of Bentley; grieved to see the enemy prevail, and dissatisfied 30 with everybody's conduct but his own. He humbly gave the modern generals to understand, that he conceived, with great submission, they were all a pack of rogues, and fools, and d—d cowards, and confounded loggerheads, and illiterate whelps, and nonsensical scoundrels; that, if himself

had been constituted general, those presumptuous dogs<sup>1</sup>, the ancients, would, long before this, have been beaten out of the field. You, said he, sit here idle; but when I, or any other valiant modern, kill an enemy, you are sure to seize the spoil. But I will not march one foot against the foe till 5 you all swear to me, that whomsoever I take or kill, his arms I shall quietly possess. Bentley having spoke thus, Scaliger, bestowing him a sour look, Miscreant prater! said he, eloquent only in thine own eyes, thou railest without wit, or truth, or discretion. The malignity of thy temper perverteth 10 nature; thy learning makes thee more barbarous, thy study of humanity more inhuman; thy converse amongst poets more grovelling, miry, and dull. All arts of civilizing others render thee rude and untractable; courts have taught thee ill manners, and polite conversation hath finished thee a 15 pedant. Besides, a greater coward burdeneth not the army. But never despond; I pass my word, whatever spoil thou takest shall certainly be thy own; though, I hope, that vile carcass will first become a prey to kites and worms.

20

Bentley durst not reply; but, half choked with spleen and rage, withdrew, in full resolution of performing some great achievement. With him, for his aid and companion, he took his beloved Wotton; resolving, by policy or surprise, to attempt some neglected quarter of the ancients' army. 25 They began their march over carcasses of their slaughtered friends; then to the right of their own forces; then wheeled northward, till they came to Aldrovandus's tomb, which they passed on the side of the declining sun. And now they arrived, with fear, toward the enemy's out-guards; looking 30 about, if haply they might spy the quarters of the wounded, or some straggling sleepers, unarmed, and remote from the

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Homer, de Thersite.

rest. As when two mongrel curs, whom native greediness and domestic want provoke and join in partnership, though fearful, nightly to invade the folds of some rich grazier, they, with tails depressed, and lolling tongues, creep soft and slow ;  
5 meanwhile, the conscious moon, now in her zenith, on their guilty heads darts perpendicular rays ; nor dare they bark, though much provoked at her refulgent visage, whether seen in puddle by reflection, or in sphere direct ; but one surveys the region round, while the t'other scouts the plain, if haply  
10 to discover, at distance from the flock, some carcass half devoured, the refuse of gorged wolves, or ominous ravens. So marched this lovely, loving pair of friends, nor with less fear and circumspection, when, at distance, they might perceive two shining suits of armour hanging upon an oak,  
15 and the owners not far off, in a profound sleep. The two friends drew lots, and the pursuing of this adventure fell to Bentley ; on he went, and, in his van, Confusion and Amaze, while Horror and Affright brought up the rear. As he came near, behold two heroes of the ancients' army, Phalaris and  
20 Æsop, lay fast asleep : Bentley would fain have dispatched them both, and, stealing close, aimed his flail at Phalaris's breast. But then the goddess Affright interposing, caught the modern in her icy arms, and dragged him from the danger she foresaw ; both the dormant heroes happened to turn at  
25 the same instant, though soundly sleeping, and busy in a dream. For Phalaris was just that minute dreaming how a most vile poetaster had lampooned him, and how he had got him roaring in his bull. And Æsop dreamed, that, as he and the ancient chiefs were lying on the ground, a wild  
30 ass broke loose, ran about, trampling and kicking in their faces. Bentley, leaving the two heroes asleep, seized on both their armours, and withdrew in quest of his darling Wotton.

He, in the meantime, had wandered long in search of

some enterprize, till at length he arrived at a small rivulet, that issued from a fountain hard by, called, in the language of mortal men, Helicon. Here he stopped, and, parched with thirst, resolved to allay it in this limpid stream. Thrice with profane hands he essayed to raise the water to his lips, 5 and thrice it slipped all through his fingers. Then he stooped prone on his breast, but, ere his mouth had kissed the liquid crystal, Apollo came, and, in the channel, held his shield betwixt the modern and the fountain, so that he drew up nothing but mud. For, although no fountain on 10 earth can compare with the clearness of Helicon, yet there lies at bottom a thick sediment of slime and mud ; for so Apollo begged of Jupiter, as a punishment to those who durst attempt to taste it with unhallowed lips, and for a lesson to all not to draw too deep or far from the 15 spring.

At the fountain-head, Wotton discerned two heroes ; the one he could not distinguish, but the other was soon known for Temple, general of the allies to the ancients. His back was turned, and he was employed in drinking large draughts 20 in his helmet from the fountain, where he had withdrawn himself to rest from the toils of the war. Wotton observing him, with quaking knees, and trembling hands, spoke thus to himself: Oh that I could kill this destroyer of our army, what renown should I purchase among the chiefs ! but to 25 issue out against him, man for man, shield against shield, and lance against lance, what modern of us dare ? For he fights like a god, and Pallas, or Apollo, are ever at his elbow. But, Oh mother ! if what Fame reports be true, that I am the son of so great a goddess, grant me to hit Temple with 30 this lance, that the stroke may send him to hell, and that I may return in safety and triumph, laden with his spoils. The first part of this prayer, the gods granted at the intercession of his mother and of Momus ; but the rest, by a



perverse wind sent from Fate was scattered in the air. Then Wotton grasped his lance, and, brandishing it thrice over his head, darted it with all his might; the goddess, his mother, at the same time, adding strength to his arm.

5 Away the lance went hissing, and reached even to the belt of the averted ancient, upon which lightly grazing, it fell to the ground. Temple neither felt the weapon touch him, nor heard it fall; and Wotton might have escaped to his army, with the honour of having remitted his lance

10 against so great a leader, unrevenged; but Apollo, enraged that a javelin, flung by the assistance of so foul a goddess, should pollute his fountain, put on the shape of —, and softly came to young Boyle, who then accompanied Temple: he pointed first to the lance, then to the distant modern

15 that flung it, and commanded the young hero to take immediate revenge. Boyle, clad in a suit of armour, which had been given him by all the gods, immediately advanced against the trembling foe, who now fled before him. (As a young lion in the Libyan plains, or Araby desert, sent by

20 his aged sire to hunt for prey, or health, or exercise, he scours along, wishing to meet some tiger from the mountains, or a furious boar; if chance, a wild ass, with brayings importune, affronts his ear, the generous beast, though loathing to destain his claws with blood so vile, yet, much provoked

25 at the offensive noise which Echo, foolish nymph, like her ill-judging sex, repeats much louder, and with more delight than Philomela's song, he vindicates the honour of the forest, and hunts the noisy long-eared animal. So Wotton fled, so Boyle pursued. But Wotton, heavy-armed, and

30 slow of foot, began to slack his course, when his lover, Bentley, appeared, returning laden with the spoils of the two sleeping ancients. Boyle observed him well, and soon discovering the helmet and shield of Phalaris, his friend, both which he had lately with his own hands new polished and

gilded ; rage sparkled in his eyes, and, leaving his pursuit after Wotton, he furiously rushed on against this new approacher. Fain would he be revenged on both ; but both now fled different ways : and, as a woman in a little house that gets a painful livelihood by spinning ; if chance her geese be 5 scattered o'er the common, she courses round the plain from side to side, compelling here and there the stragglers to the flock ; they cackle loud, and flutter o'er the champaign. So Boyle pursued, so fled this pair of friends ; finding at length their flight was vain, they bravely joined, and drew 10 themselves in phalanx. First Bentley threw a spear with all his force, hoping to pierce the enemy's breast ; but Pallas came unseen, and in the air took off the point, and clapped on one of lead, which, after a dead bang against the enemy's shield, fell blunted to the ground. Then Boyle, 15 observing well his time, took a lance of wondrous length and sharpness ; and, as this pair of friends compacted, stood close side to side, he wheeled him to the right, and, with unusual force, darted the weapon. Bentley saw his fate approach, and flanking down his arms close to his ribs, 20 hoping to save his body, in went the point, passing through arm and side, nor stopped or spent its force, till it had also pierced the valiant Wotton, who, going to sustain his dying friend, shared his fate. As when a skilful cook has trussed a brace of woodcocks, he, with iron skewer, pierces the 25 tender sides of both, their legs and wings close pinioned to their ribs ; so was this pair of friends transfixed, till down they fell, joined in their lives, joined in their deaths ; so closely joined, that Charon will mistake them both for one, and waft them over Styx for half his fare. Farewell, 30 beloved, loving pair ! few equals have you left behind : and happy and immortal shall you be, if all my wit and eloquence can make you. *with Satan*

And, now	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*    *	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*    *	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*    *	<i>Desunt cætera.</i>						

## THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS.

197, l. 1. *The Bookseller to the Reader*. Unlike the introductory notices to the *Tale of a Tub*, this short preface seems not to be the work of Swift. It must have been written after 1703, when Charles Boyle became Earl of Orrery; but Swift seems to have added very little to either treatise after 1697 or 1698. The note contains none of the characteristic marks of his style, and he probably left the bookseller to employ some hack for the purpose. Throughout the *Battle of the Books* Swift's style is rather more careful and regular than in most of his work.

l. 4. *the former*, i. e. the *Tale of a Tub*.

198, l. 1. *W. Wotton* (1666-1726), of St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, was noted in his earliest youth as a prodigy of learning.

He was B.A. at 13, and already he had been made the subject of complimentary addresses from many of the scholars of the day. He was commonly called 'the polyglot infant.' His *Reflections* is a book which, dull as it is, shews an enormous amount of information for a man of 28. But his chief mental endowment was memory: and he is represented as eccentric in conduct. Nichol's *Lit. Anecdotes*, iv. 253, gives a long list of the encomiums addressed to Wotton as a boy.

Temple's *Essay* was published in 1692, and the first edition of Wotton's *Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning* was published in 1694. It professed to be rather a review of the current controversy, than a manifesto on the side of the Moderns, although the whole tendency of the book is in that direction: and, although Wotton treated Temple with respect, he distinctly assumed the attitude of an opponent. In 1695, Boyle's edition of *Phalaris* appeared; and it was only after this that, when Wotton was preparing a second edition of his *Reflections*, Bentley came to his help by writing the *Dissertation* on the spurious epistles ascribed to Phalaris and other equally doubtful writings of the kind. It was issued as an appendix to Wotton's book. Boyle published a reply in 1696: and in 1699 Bentley re-issued his *Dissertation* in a more complete and longer form.

199, l. 9. *being a sort of cream*. Swift uses the same metaphor in the *Tale of a Tub* (p. 170, l. 24).

l. 16. *Annual Records of Time*. An original note here occurs, 'Riches produceth Pride: Pride is War's Ground, &c. Vid. Ephem. de Mary Clarke, opt. edit.' Scott adds 'now called Wing's Sheet Almanack, and printed by J. Roberts, for the Company of Stationers.' Wing was one of the well-known Almanac writers of the day, named by Swift in one of the Bickerstaff pamphlets. *Ephemerides* was a title given to some of these compilations, but I have failed to trace any in the name of Mary Clarke. Swift's reference may be purposely misleading, and the point of the sentence may very likely be to sneer at the prophetic almanacs of the day, by pretending that Time would choose such a vehicle for announcing the secrets which he alone can reveal.

ll. 16-27. Pride, says Swift, certainly produces war, and *perhaps* is itself produced by Riches. But, however this may be, Pride is certainly own sister to Want; Want is the parent of Lust and Avarice: and as these produce war, Want as well as Pride must be held to be the source of war.

l. 29. *an institution of the many*=a government in which the multitude bear sway.

200, l. 21. *on the part of*=as a motive on the side of.

1. 29. *conjecture at*. Swift is so prone to introduce the preposition at the close of a sentence that, in this instance, he has added one entirely useless. Cf. p. 146, l. 11.

201, l. 8. Cf. p. 159, l. 26.

1. 11. *summit*, for 'summit,' a word not infrequently found in Swift's day and in the preceding century (cf. p. 204, l. 2).

1. 12. *or else the said ancients will*. Observe the omission of 'that' after *else*, and the change of the *would* of the previous sentence into *will*. According to his habit, Swift, for the sake of force, changes the *oratio obliqua* into the actual words of the emissaries of the Moderns.

1. 27. *if they did, or did not, know*: i. e. folly, if they did, ignorance, if they did not, know.

1. 34. *by the moderns with much indignation, who still resisted*. Observe the separation, which sounds awkwardly to us, of the relative and its antecedent.

202, l. 10. *which, conveyed through a sort of engine . . . infinite numbers of these are darted*. Observe the breach in the construction, of which we have already noted many instances in Swift.

1. 15. *gall and copperas* are, in fact, the principal ingredients in ink.

203, l. 7. *to inform them*, to give them character and meaning. Cf. *forma informans*, p. 157, l. 22.

1. 10. *brutum hominis*, the elementary principle of man, without the 'plastic' of the soul. The notion is first suggested by the passage in the *Phaedo* (81), where the lower and more grovelling souls are said to haunt the neighbourhood of tombs and sepulchres, being not entirely detached from the earthly element. Milton reproduces the Platonic notion in *Comus* (470)—

'Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp

Of seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres

Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave;

As loth to leave the body that it loved,' &c.

Dr. Henry More, the Platonist, in his *Immortality of the Soul*, (Bk. II. ch. xvi), quaintly expresses the notion that bodies 'lately dead, or as fresh as those that are but newly dead,' may facilitate the appearance of the souls of those that are gone, 'and so invite them (i. e. the ghosts) to play tricks when they can do it at so cheap a rate.' Sir T. Brown (*Religio Medici*) thinks they are not the souls of the dead, 'but unquiet walks of devils,' who choose the cemeteries as 'dormitories of the dead, where the Devil beholds with pride his spoils and trophies.' Sir Kenelm Digby, in his *Observations on the Religio Medici*, leans to More's view rather than Brown's, and repro-

duces the idea of Plato, that those 'terrene' souls that 'go out of their bodies with affection to the things they left behind them,' appear in 'cemeteries and charnel-houses.'

These variations in the fancy are interesting, as they shew us where Swift's reading lay.

l. 19. *to bind them to the peace with strong iron chains.* The chains with which certain books used to be bound in libraries. Books of controversy are to be bound by those chains, which were not considered necessary in the case of books of the modern taste. (Cf. p. 156, l. 19.)

l. 24. *Aristotle . . . Plato.* The dispute between the Platonists and Aristotelians was one in which Swift had no interest, and of which, probably, he knew very little. He introduces this episode merely to illustrate the struggles between authors; and, as a fact, many of those to whom he refers sarcastically were noted as impugnors of mediaeval Aristotelianism.

l. 27. *near eight hundred years.* Duns Scotus wrote in the 14th century: and it is curious that Swift should assign the supremacy of the preceding eight hundred years to Plato, as they really covered the period from the decay of Platonism in the 6th century to its revival in the 14th.

l. 30. *polemics* = polemical or controversial works.

204, l. 23. *regal library* = the Royal library of St. James's.

*a person of great valour.* Dr. Bentley, who was appointed to the office in 1694.

l. 24. *chiefly renowned for his humanity.* This refers to the words used by Charles Boyle, in the preface to his edition of the *Letters of Phalaris*, where he complained of what he deemed the churlish conduct of Bentley in connexion with the loan of a MS., as 'in keeping with his extraordinary notion of courtesy' (*pro singulari humanitate sua*). *Humanitas* signified, of course, 'courtesy'; but it was one of the current jokes of Bentley's opponents to 'English' it as 'humanity'—thus implying that he was a savage as well as a boor.

l. 27. *two of the ancient chiefs.* Phalaris and Aesop, the spuriousness of the writings ascribed to these two having been the chief topic of the *Dissertation*.

l. 33. *in reducing to practice* = in bringing back (themselves or their speculations) to the test of practice.

205, l. 10. *a strange confusion of place among all the books.* Bentley did, more than once, complain of the disorder of the library, as excusing occasional difficulty of access to MSS., and Swift probably refers to this, and offers an uncomplimentary explanation of it.

1. 22. *the Seven Wise Masters*. This was a popular class-book of the day, much in use as a book for the moral instruction of children. It is curious that Swift should name it as a representative of the Moderns, since the original compilation is traced back to Sandabar, Chief of the Indian Brahmins, who is said to have lived before the Christian era. It was certainly of Eastern origin; and, from Hebrew, Greek, and Latin versions, spread all over Europe, being translated into every language. It is a string of stories hanging upon a contrivance like that of the *Arabian Nights*, and contains some tales that have obtained enormous vogue. Amongst others, that of Gelert, the faithful hound, which has located itself in Wales, is first found in this compilation.

1. 24. *Withers*. This spelling of the name of George Wither (1588-1667) occurs in the first edition, and has been repeated in all others. It occurs again on p. 212, l. 21; and the same spelling is found in Oldham, in his *Satire dissuading from Poetry*, and in Dryden's Dedication of the *Aeneid*. Probably Wither's adherence to the Parliamentary side in the time of the Rebellion was sufficient, without any thought of his literary defects, to account for his being joined in a sarcastic reference with Swift's unforgiven enemy, Dryden.

1. 31. *consisting chiefly of light-horse, heavy-armed foot, and mercenaries*. The enumeration does not quite agree with that on p. 212. But in both cases the *light-horse* are the poets, other than epic; the *foot* are the historians; while *mercenaries* seem to be those who have little interest in the points of the struggle, but, from the accident of their date, fight on the side of the Moderns.

1. 33. *their horses*. The previous clause makes this almost absurd, were it not that Swift's elliptical habit requires us to supply the sense by referring the present clause to the light-horse.

206, l. 14. The note is original, and refers to the paradox that the Moderns could claim superiority in point of ancient descent and more prolonged experience. Cf. Hobbes's *Answer* to Davenant's Preface to *Gondibert*: 'I honour antiquity, but that which is commonly called old time is young time.'

207, l. 1. *Temple happened to hear them*. Temple had introduced the dispute from France into England.

1. 33. *Beelzebub*. The god of flies.

208, l. 17. *pruned himself*. Cleared his wings of cobweb, as a bird preparing for flight smooths his ruffled plumage. Cf. Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, Act v. Sc. 4—speaking of Jove's eagle—

'his royal bird

Prunes the immortal wing and cloyes his beak.'



209, l. 8. *a freebooter*. The usual break in the construction gives some additional energy to the objurcation.

l. 12. *my improvements in the mathematics*. Vaunted on behalf of the Moderns in Wotton's *Reflections*. Cf. p. 207, l. 16, and p. 211, l. 15.

l. 28. *consider duration and matter, as well as method and art*. Swift repeats this distinction between what he considers to be the chief and the secondary elements in literary excellence, almost in the same words, on p. 211, l. 22. At first sight it would seem scarcely to agree with the position he takes up in the dispute between Ancients and Moderns. It might appear that '*method and art*' (or '*skill*' as he puts it on p. 211) were the qualities which, in the opinion of those whose sympathies would naturally lie with the Ancients, were the prime sources of '*duration*,' instead of being sharply distinguished from it. But so to interpret Swift's words would be to import the terms of more recent criticism into the discussions of Swift's day. By '*method and art*' Swift means pedantic rules and artificiality; and by '*duration*' he means rather the breadth of treatment which gives to literary work an enduring interest as distinguished from topics of the day, than merely the continued respect and admiration which may be secured by artistic excellence.

Swift was really fighting the battle of literary art against the whims and caprices of a spurious originality which despises rule, and claims admiration for its laboured ingenuity and its obscurity. But no man was ever less prone to allow rules of art to become a burden or to fetter his liberty.

The commonplace description of the *Tale of a Tub* and the *Battle of the Books* as incidents in a forgotten controversy, might lead us to suppose that Swift had erred against his own rule. But we can never understand either book until we have learned fully that they deal with subjects as fresh in their interest for us to-day as when the books were written. The accidental contemporary phases of the struggle may have passed; but it is as much with us as ever, and must remain with us as long as the fundamental differences of taste, education, and temperament endure amongst men.

210, l. 7. *that which, by a lazy contemplation, &c.* There is no doubt as to the text, but the sentence is evidently irregular. It is the '*overweening pride*,' and not the one variety of being, which feeds and engenders on itself, and turns all into venom. But this second '*which*' introduces a confusion: and instead of writing '*produces*' in the following clause, Swift repeats the participial construction from '*feeding and engendering*.'

l. 12. *distinction*, in the sense of 'discrimination.'

l. 23. *by a strange effect of the regent's humanity*. Another reference to the *singularis humanitas* of Bentley, and his office of Royal Librarian. See p. 204, ll. 24 and 27 (notes).

211, l. 5. *It is but to adjust* = all we have to do is to adjust.

l. 30. *which*. There is, of set purpose, some indefiniteness about this relative. It seems to refer both to the *satire* of the Moderns, and to the *poison* of the spider.

212, l. 7. *the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light*. Whatever the precise origin of this famous phrase (revived in our own day by Mr. Matthew Arnold), Swift has made it distinctively his own. It seems likely that the conjunction of qualities was taken from the advice to the pedant in Lucian's *Lexiphanes*, *Μάλιστα δὲ θύε Χάρισι καὶ Σαφηνείᾳ*, 'Sacrifice chiefly to the Graces and to Perspicuity,'—'which,' the adviser goes on, 'have now altogether forsaken you.' The phrase is cited in Boyle's Answer to Bentley's *Dissertation* (1698), which was chiefly written by Atterbury. But it is quite as likely that the citation was suggested by Swift (who may, like others, have contributed to the Answer) as that he borrowed it from thence. The passage in Lucian curiously illustrates Swift's attitude. The pedant is told not to imitate the latest fashions of the Sophists (Swift's Moderns) but 'to follow with zeal the old models.'

l. 14. *consults* for 'consultations.' Cf. Dryden, in the *Dedication to King Arthur*, where he says the friends of Charles II were not only boon companions, but 'able to advise him in a serious consult'; and the closing line of *Paradise Lost*, Book I, 'the great consult began.' See also p. 222, l. 19.

l. 19. *the horse*. Cf. p. 205, l. 31 (note).

l. 20. *Dryden and Withers*. Coupled together again, as on p. 205, l. 23.

l. 22. *Despreaux*. Nicolas Boileau, Sieur Despréaux (1635-1711), is named by Swift with as little sarcastic intention as is aimed at Cowley. Boileau's work was, indeed, all on the side for which Swift was fighting; and he not only ridiculed the pretension, put forward on his behalf, of being superior to Horace, but strove consistently for all those principles of criticism which the ancient models have inspired.

l. 22. *the bowmen* = the philosophers.

l. 23. *Des Cartes, Gassendi, and Hobbes*. These are probably chosen as representative names, without any special reference to their views. We have already found how numerous are Swift's citations from Descartes, in whose system he seems to have been interested, although his way of speaking of it is occasionally half-

sarcastic. Gassendi (1592-1655) was a devout French Churchman, who held a leading place amidst the mental and physical philosophers of his day. He wrote against the scholastic Aristotelianism; against the Cabalists; and was so sharply divided from some of Descartes' views, that his own followers formed a school of philosophy as distinguished from the Cartesians. Curiously enough, although his views were essentially different from those of Hobbes, with whom Swift now ranges him, the two had a mutual respect for one another, and occasionally corresponded. Hobbes is named by Swift as frequently as Descartes.

l. 26. *like that of Evander*. Swift's memory has betrayed him here. The incident occurs in the well-known description of the Games in the 5th *Aeneid*, and the arrow was that of Acestes. Swift has transferred it to the later books, where the meeting of Evander and Aeneas, and their alliance, are described.

l. 27. *Paracelsus brought a squadron of stink-pot-flingers from the snowy mountains of Rhaetia*. Refers to the despised chemical experiments of Paracelsus and his followers. Paracelsus was a native of Switzerland, and hence is said to come from the Alpine heights of Rhaetia, which corresponds to the Austrian Tyrol.

l. 29. *dragoons* = medical writers.

l. 30. *Harvey*, whose discovery of the circulation of the blood was disparaged by Temple.

*aga*, the title of a principal officer of the Turkish janizzaries.

213. l. 1. *heavy-armed foot, all mercenaries* = the historians. They are called mercenaries, because they fight from accident on the side of the Moderns, having no interest in the struggle, and writing, most of them, in Latin.

l. 2. *Guicciardini* (1482-1540), the Florentine statesman and historian, who wrote, in Italian, a lengthy history of Italy in his own day. Boccalini (see p. 81, l. 4) tells a story of a Spartan citizen, who, having said in three words what might have been said in two, was sentenced to punishment, but offered the alternative of reading Guicciardini's history of the Pisan war. He read the first few pages; but then begged for the severest punishment, so as to escape from a continuation of the dreary task.

*Davila* (1576-1623), an Italian, who took service under Henry IV of France, and wrote the *Istoria delle guerre civile di Francia*, detailing the struggles in France in the latter half of the 16th century.

*Polydore Virgil* (1470-1555), of Italian birth, settled in England as a Churchman, and became involved in disputes with Wolsey. He wrote a history, entitled *Historia Anglica*.

*Buchanan* (1506-1582) wrote, in Latin, his history of Scotland. His well-known opposition to the *regimen* of women made him an easy object of attack in the reign of Queen Anne.

*Mariana* (1536-1624), a Spanish Jesuit, who wrote, in Latin, a history of Spain, and whose defence of tyrannicide earned for him, it may be, Swift's deeper contempt.

l. 3. *Cambden*, a misspelling for *Camden*, repeated in all the editions. He was the well-known antiquarian historian (1551-1623), author of the *Britannia*, also in Latin.

*The engineers* = mathematicians.

l. 4. *Regiomontanus*, a German mathematician and natural philosopher (1436-1476), whose name of Müller was thus Latinized from Königsberg, his birthplace.

*Wilkins* (1614-1672) is evidently treated by Swift as a typical representative of the Royal Society, to whose transactions he contributed much that was whimsical and quaint rather than scientific, although he attained some distinction as a mathematician. He shewed a remarkable power of conforming to political change, having married Cromwell's sister and yet been appointed Bishop of Chester by Charles II.

l. 5. *Scotus, Aquinas, and Bellarmine*. Scotus and Aquinas are named as typical leaders in the Scholastic philosophy. Bellarmine, the great Jesuit (1542-1621), is joined with them, as being a theologian of the Catholic Church, although otherwise he had little in common with them. In the 17th century he was taken as the typical defender of Catholicism against Protestantism.

l. 8. *calones*, soldiers' servants—hence the disorderly rout of camp-followers.

l. 8. *L'Estrange*, or *Lestrange*. See p. 177, l. 5 (note).

l. 15. *Vossius*. Gerard Voss of Leyden (1577-1649) was a man of wide classical learning, who obtained, in England, the patronage of Laud, and whose son, with less learning and a less reputable character, became Canon of Windsor in the days of Charles II.

l. 21. *among the gods, she always tells truth*,—which she does not elsewhere. Cf. p. 53, l. 24 (note).

l. 27. *Momus*, the god of jealous mockery. In Hesiod's *Theogony* (214) we read that 'Night produced Destiny and Black Fate, and Sleep and the tribe of Dreams . . . and Momus and bitter Care.' Plato, in the *Republic*, uses the word as a proverbial personification of carping criticism. But Swift, doubtless, had in his mind Lucian's Assembly of the Gods, where Momus is the principal spokesman, and accuses all the gods in turn, not excepting Zeus himself, of various crimes. He confesses himself to be 'free of tongue and

loth to pass in silence any wrong.' At the close Zeus tells him that there is some truth in his censures, and that it is well to nip in the bud wrongs that may spread. Momus is, therefore, the Spirit of Censure: from whom to the Spirit of modern Criticism, Swift intends us to infer that there is but one step, but that a considerable step (p. 214, l. 24).

214, l. 6. *menial servants to Jupiter*; and l. 14, *called by mortal men accidents or events*. Cf. Sir Kenelm Digby's *Observations on Brown's Religio Medici*. 'All outward circumstances, whose highest link, poets say prettily, is fastened to Jupiter's chair, and the lowest is rivetted to every individual on earth.'

l. 26. *Ignorance, her father and husband, &c.* Cf. p. 120, l. 28 (note).

215, l. 18. *who give wisdom to infants*. Swift here forgets the circumstances, and gives the rein to his satire in its full force. Had he remembered these circumstances, he could hardly, even in derision, have spoken thus of the position of Charles Boyle, who, scarcely more than a schoolboy, had offered combat to Bentley. Whatever Bentley was, not even his bitterest enemy could have described him as an 'infant,' a 'schoolboy,' or a 'coffee-house wit.'

216, l. 6. *Gresham and Covent Garden*. The houses of the Royal Society and of the coffee-house wits.

l. 11. *virtuosos*. See p. 104, l. 2 (note).

217, l. 19. *Galen*. Claudius Galenus, of Pergamum (A. D. 130-200), perhaps the greatest medical authority amongst the ancients.

l. 26. The blank is left probably because Swift neither felt inclined nor qualified to discuss the relations between the different medical authorities of recent times. He was not, indeed, so fitted for the scientific discussion as the despised Wotton, whose treatment of that part of the subject is full and careful, however inept. The *aga* (see p. 210, l. 30) is Harvey: and the first blank must therefore be supposed to cover the incidents of the fight from Paracelsus to Harvey, and the second blank those from Harvey downwards.

218, l. 5. *vortex*. Cf. p. 165, l. 10 (note).

l. 6. This hiatus covers the opening of the fight between the horsemen.

l. 13. *Gondibert* was an heroic poem, written by Sir William Davenant in 1650. It is composed in rhymed quatrains, and upon the taste of our own day leaves no other impression than that of unparalleled dulness. But in the eyes of the author and his friends it seemed an attempt of the first importance. Not only did it earn the unstinted praise of Waller and Cowley, but it was ushered in by a tedious and obscure preface, addressed to Hobbes, in which the

errors of previous epic poets were set forth, and in which the ambitious purposes of the writer, and his determination to avoid such flights of imagination as he thinks have vitiated other epics, are explained. He is not always consistent with himself: for while he hopes that the rhymed verse will enable it, with the more ease, to be recited at village feasts, he yet professes to write, not for the common taste of mankind, but for those whom he calls 'necessary men,' i. e. men of light and leading. Hobbes answers the preface by stating his testimony 'briefly thus: I never yet saw poem, that had so much shape of art, health of morality, and vigour and beauty of expression, as this of yours.' Such is the worth of contemporary literary criticism judged by the standards of another age. The poem did not escape some satirical attacks, and its reception generally seems not to have answered Davenant's hopes so far as to encourage him to complete it: but he consoles himself with the thought that the fame denied by his own age will be accorded by posterity; and Hobbes adhered to his own opinion in its favour, even after the attacks of the wits. Rymer was more chary of his praise, but still thought that there ran 'something roughly noble through the whole.'

l. 22. *Denham*. Sir John Denham (1615-1668) was one who deserved, what he here obtains from Swift, the recognition of a certain true literary gift. By some of the best critics of the day when the *Battle of the Books* was written, Denham was held to share with Cowley and Waller the merit of having moulded the poetic diction of England: and the distinctive quality ascribed to him is shewn by Pope's lines (*Essay on Criticism*)—

'And praise the easy vigour of a line

Where Denham's strength and Waller's sweetness join.'

His poem on *Cooper's Hill*—which has yielded at least the hackneyed quotation, against the currency of which Swift, in one of his poems, feels it needful to protest, 'Oh, could I flow like thee,' &c.—is that by which his name is chiefly remembered. It has no real epic character: and although it contains an occasional foretaste of the vigour of expression which Dryden was to bring to perfection, it has scarcely any other quality which would recommend it to the taste of our own day. A short poem on the death of Cowley (whom Denham outlived only by a year) is more graceful and deft in workmanship. Compared with *Gondibert*, his work justified the half-divine descent with which Swift credits him.

l. 27. *Wesley* (Samuel, 1662-1735) was Rector of Epworth in Lincolnshire. He is chiefly remembered as the father of John and Charles Wesley. But in Swift's day he had attained some little note as the author of some poems, including one whose title is enough to

shew its character, *The Life of Christ, an Heroic Poem*. Garth has gibbeted him in a couplet in the *Dispensary*—

‘Had Wesley never aimed in verse to please  
We had not ranked him with our Ogilbys.’

1. 28. *Perrault* (Charles 1628-1703) was one of the earliest defenders of the Moderns in France, and, with Fontenelle, is cited as one of the leaders on that side of the controversy, by Wotton. Hence Swift’s attack upon them both. From his earliest youth Perrault had a love of controversy, which he stimulated by voracious and ill-regulated reading. In 1687 his poem on *Le Siècle de Louis le Grand* provoked ridicule by its extravagant claims on behalf of the Moderns. Between 1688 and 1698 he published, in 4 vols, a *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*. This literary freak was only one phase of his mental tendency, which was essentially directed against authority. His controversial works are forgotten, but his *Contes des Fées* has been a favourite with generations of children.

1. 29. *Fontenelle* (Bernard de Bovier de, 1657 1757) was a nephew of Corneille, and hence was early in life directed towards literature. Like Perrault, he took the Modern side in the controversy against Boileau and Racine, moved thereto partly by an utter absence of any germ of literary taste, and partly by the restless spirit of free-thought in which he anticipated the epoch into which his own old age extended. Irreverence, bred of a certain intellectual acuteness and intrepidity, was not mitigated in Fontenelle by any real interest in, or sympathy with, what was great in literature.

1. 33. *the slowness of whose pace*. What Lord Tennyson has described as Virgil’s ‘ocean roll of rhythm.’

219, l. 15. *like the lady in a lobster*, seems to refer to the fancied likeness to a lady’s head in a hood detected in one part of the lobster’s shell.

1. 19. *in a long harangue*. In Dryden’s Preliminary Dissertations introducing his translation of the *Aeneid*, he undertakes the defence of Virgil, who, he says, with Spenser in English, has been his Master. Dryden’s translation was only published in 1697, the year in which Swift was writing.

1. 25. *though his was of gold*. An original note says ‘*Vide Homer*.’ The passage referred to is that in the Sixth Book, where Glaucus exchanges his armour of gold, worth a hundred beeves, for Diomed’s armour of brass, worth nine beeves.

220, l. 1. *Lucan*. Although Swift’s words on the preceding page shew that he knew how to appreciate Virgil as the ‘wielder of the noblest measure ever moulded by the lips of man,’ he yet sympathises with the taste of his own age in his admiration of the rhetorical im-

petuosity of Lucan's style, and perhaps insufficiently observed those defects which have caused Lucan's fame to decay. Swift's description of Lucan's style, however, is apt, and implies some hint of condemnation. According to Quintilian, Lucan was a model for the imitation of orators as much as for that of poets.

l. 4. *Blackmore*. Cf. p. 177, l. 5 (note). In the *Rhapsody on Poetry*, Swift, who had by that time, perhaps, imbibed more of the contempt felt by Pope and his faction for Blackmore, speaks of Blackmore with more sweeping condemnation, as the successor to Flecknoe's crown.

l. 5. *one of the mercenaries*. Cf. p. 213, l. 1 (note). It is difficult to say why Blackmore is named here as a mercenary. It may mean that he wrote with no natural bias to Moderns or Ancients, but took his place amongst the Moderns from interested motives rather than from taste.

l. 8. *Æsculapius*, as the patron of physicians—that being the profession of Blackmore.

l. 19. *Creech*. Thomas Creech (1659-1700) belonged to Wadham College, Oxford, and afterwards obtained a Fellowship at All Souls. His translation of Lucretius, published in 1682, obtained wide popularity, and, with his later annotated edition of the text, earned him considerable respect from judges of weight. He followed this up by numerous other translations, one of which especially—that of Juvenal's 13th Satire—won the admiration of Warton. In 1684 he essayed that task which has proved a pitfall to so many—a verse translation of Horace. The fact that it was dedicated to Dryden would not lessen Swift's readiness to satirize it: but it was poor enough to deserve all the contempt which the episode here described implies. Creech committed suicide in 1700.

l. 24. *Ogleby*. John Ogleby or Ogilby, born near Edinburgh in 1600, had a strange experience. He began life as a dancing-master; when of mature age educated himself into the possession of much ill-assorted information: and with the confidence which such self-education not rarely gives, essayed the translation of Virgil and Homer. He survived till 1676, and spent a busy life as translator, writer of epics, printer, and map-compiler. His industry and honesty deserve some respect: but his name became, in literature, a byword for laborious incapacity.

l. 26. *Oldham*. John Oldham (1653-1683) is named in connexion with Pindar, from his many Pindaric Odes, in which (to use his own words) he found a language suited to his genius—

'Soft as my Muse, and unconfined as she  
When flowing in numbers of Pindaric liberty.'



To Pope he seemed to have 'strong rage, but it is too much like Billingsgate.' Coarse, irregular, extravagant as Oldham often is, he had a strong vein of genius, fitly described in Dryden's beautiful elegy, beginning—

'Farewell! too little and too lately known,  
Whom I began to think and call my own.'

Dryden calls him, with some aptness, 'the Marcellus of our tongue'; and the literary treasure-house of the age lost much by the early death of Oldham. That he won Dryden's regard would be no passport to Swift's favour: but it is curious that Swift's own poetry contains not a few reminiscences of Oldham. Cf. Oldham's *Satire dissuading against Poetry* with Swift's *Rhapsody*.

l. 27. *Afra the Amazon*. This is Mrs. Afra Behn, whose novels and plays, as well as her gallantry, illustrate much in the coarser taste of the day. To a modern reader the strangest feature is that she was thought by some of her contemporaries to err by an excess of wit—the quality which seems most conspicuous by its absence from all she wrote.

l. 30. *Cowley*. Abraham Cowley (1618–1667) had been so much a model for Swift's early poems, that the tempered description of his engagement with Pindar, ending with the transformation of a portion of his body into a dove, is not surprising. The contemporary of Denham, he cultivated letters with a far greater devotion than he, and has left a far deeper impression on our literature. He has suffered, perhaps unduly, from being made the subject of some of Johnson's most pointed criticism, in the *Lives of the Poets*, and has been remembered as the typical specimen of that overwrought artificiality in poetry to which Johnson has given the name of the Metaphysical School. Cowley, in fact, only followed a custom much more rife in the preceding age; but his laboured conceits are more remarked because joined with more graceful language than his predecessors used. His Pindarics were a literary error: but it does not therefore follow that they did not help the later triumphs of the Ode as a phase in English poetry. The shield given him by Venus is that 'language of the heart' which Pope declares himself still to love, though 'forgot his epic, nay Pindaric art.'

221, l. 26. *amarant*, or *amaranth*, a flower whose blossoms never withered, and hence served as preservatives against decay. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, iii. 352

'Their crowns inwove with amarant and gold,  
Immortal amarant: a flower which once  
In Paradise fast by the stream of life  
Began to bloom.'

222, l. 4. *Bentley*. See p. 85, l. 32 (note). It is not easy to account for the exaggerated bitterness of Swift's attack upon Bentley, except on the theory that his hostility nursed itself on its own heat. Bentley had not attacked Swift personally; he belonged to the political party to which Swift at this time ostensibly belonged; and it seems strange that Bentley's arraignment of Temple, which certainly did not exceed the limits then common in literary controversy, should have provoked such wrath in Swift. The strong language used by others of the participants in the fight did not prevent subsequent friendship. Bentley seems to have been afterwards on friendly terms both with Boyle and his ally, Atterbury. On the whole the current opinion seems to have been that Bentley, the weight of whose scholarship was not felt by his own age, was worsted in the fight. Garth probably expressed the general view, when in the *Dispensary* he wrote, 'And to a Bentley 'tis we owe a Boyle,'—a compliment which Boyle repaid by laudatory verses.

l. 9. *Etesian wind*. The Etesian winds were annual (*ἔτος*) trade-winds, blowing during the hot months.

l. 12. *copperas ... gall*. The ingredients of ink. Cf. p. 202, l. 15.

l. 19. *a consult*. Cf. p. 212, l. 14 (note).

l. 32. *a pack of rogues, &c.* This is a travesty of the somewhat homely energy of Bentley's polemical style—what his opponents called 'his low and mean ways of speech.'

223, l. 1. *presumptuous dogs*, and note '*Vid. Homer, de Thersite.*' Swift refers of course to *Iliad* ii. 212. But though Homer's personal description of Thersites tallies very closely with that which Swift gives of Bentley, Thersites makes no such boast as Swift puts into Bentley's mouth. He 'wrangles with the kings,' and advises a return home: but he does not claim that Troy would have fallen under his generalship. The taunt in l. 4 is, however, that of Thersites in Homer.

l. 7. *Scaliger*. See p. 189, l. 31 (note). Here the younger Scaliger is referred to, and, as he had been named with praise by Bentley, the rebuke here uttered is all the more sarcastic.

l. 8. *Miscreant*. This word played a curious part in Swift's subsequent quarrel with Steele. Steele had applied the word, in its ordinary sense, to a writer in the *Examiner*, whom he wrongly identified with Swift. Instead of frankly withdrawing it, he hinted that in the sense of 'unbeliever' (*mescroyant*) it would still apply to Swift.

l. 11. *thy study of humanity more inhuman*. Cf. p. 204, l. 24 (note). *Humanity* is here used in the sense of classical learning.

l. 28. *Aldrovandus*. The Latinized form of the name of Aldro-

vandi of Bologna (1522-1607), a naturalist of enormous industry, who spent some sixty years over a monumental work on natural history in all its branches, the greater part of which was not published till after his death. Buffon admits that it has merits, if it were one-tenth the size. 'I see him,' says Buffon, 'in his library reading ancients, moderns, philosophers, theologians, jurisconsults, historians, travelers, poets—only to catch a word or phrase remotely connected with his subject: copying their remarks, ranging them in alphabetical order, storing his note-books, and then beginning his work, determined that no scrap that he has gathered shall be lost.' Swift represents this gigantic work, which he may have seen cumbering the shelves of the Royal Library, as its author's tomb.

l. 29. *on the side of the declining sun*—and therefore away from the first source of light. Cf. p. 201, l. 8, 'the prospect . . . towards the east,' and still more p. 159, l. 26 (note).

224, l. 19. *Phalaris and Æsop*. The spurious epistles of Phalaris, and the fables ascribed to Æsop, had been selected for admiration by Temple, and were the subject of a large part of Bentley's *Dissertation*. It is curious that Swift commits himself so fully on the genuineness of the Epistles, which was not maintained by Boyle. As Boyle had edited Phalaris, so Anthony Alsop, of Christ Church, in 1698, edited the Fables of Æsop.

l. 29. *a wild ass*. This simile, applied to Bentley, may have been provoked by Boyle's charge that Bentley had applied the same to him. As a fact, Bentley only likened the Sophist who wrote the spurious Epistles, to an ass in a lion's skin.

225, l. 15. *not to draw too deep*—a different lesson from that given by Pope—'Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.' But Pope uses 'deep' in the sense of the 'large draughts' of l. 20. The *depth* against which Swift warns is the profundity of pedantry.

l. 17. *the one he could not distinguish*. This is Boyle (see p. 226. l. 13). Swift seems to hint that Boyle's personal part in the contest was not a very prominent one.

l. 28. *Pallas or Apollo, are*. This wrong concord is not infrequent in Swift. Cf. Vol. II. p. 339, l. 9.

l. 29. *Oh mother!* i. e. Criticism. See p. 216, l. 15.

l. 33. *The first part of this prayer, the gods granted*. This would seem to shew, unlike the previous passage, that Swift thought Wotton had scored a point against Temple, albeit one so slight as to be unnoticed by Temple himself.

226, l. 6. *the averted ancient*—or rather, 'ally of the ancients.'

l. 12. *the shape of* —. This doubtless refers to Atterbury, who was Boyle's chief inspirer in his *Examination of the Dissertation* pub-

lished in 1698. In a letter to Boyle of the same year, Atterbury bitterly resents the ingratitude and vanity of the youth, in failing to recognise his help. 'In laying the design of the book, in writing above half of it, in reviewing a good part of the rest, in transcribing the whole, and attending the press, half a year of my life went away . . . No one expression has dropped from you that could give me reason to believe that you had any opinion of what I had done, or even took it kindly from me. . . You will easily, therefore, excuse me if I meddle no further in a matter where my management has had the ill-luck to displease you and a good friend of yours: whereas I had the vanity to think and hope that it would have sat ill on nobody but Mr. Wotton and Dr. Bentley.'

l. 17. *by all the gods*. By Atterbury, and others of his Oxford friends.

l. 27. *Philomela*, the nightingale.

l. 34. *with his own hands new polished and gilded*—referring to Boyle's edition of the Letters of Phalaris.

PRINTED IN ENGLAND AT THE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD  
BY JOHN JOHNSON  
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

